



HONOR JAMES

Goldie &
Her Bears

NAUGHTY FAIRY TALES 1

Two
Passion

Goldie and Her Bears

Naughty Fairy Tales
Book One

by Honor James

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to all of the amazing people that I've met. There are so many of you, but when we help each other, it makes life so much better! You ladies know just who you are.

Also, Michelle & Jana – you ladies rock. Thank you for the kick in my pants to get my happy ass in gear.

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Prologue

Twenty something years ago...

Tiptoeing through the quiet, darkened house, Goldie stopped in the doorway and peeked out into the hall. It was quiet, except for the sound of her daddy snoring and she pressed a hand to her mouth to muffle her giggle.

Easing the door open, she tiptoed down the hall, staying near the wall to avoid the creak in the middle that her mommy would hear if she weren't careful. Reaching the stairs was the easy part—the hard part was getting down them. Two steps down on the right, then across to the left for four more, middle for two, left for one and the right for the rest.

Reaching the bottom, she went still and listened, just daddy's snoring, no other sounds. Grinning wide, she raced through to her daddy's office to where the book was kept. Her footed pajamas made little *shh-shh* sounds as she ran on the wood floor. Easing the door closed to the office, she counted her steps to the desk.

Stretching up onto her toes, she pulled the lamp cord and then squinted into the light. Blinking, she turned and raced for the bookshelf. Clambering up onto the stool, she pulled out the book she wanted and then hopped down. Going to the big armchair, she tossed the book up and then pulled herself into it.

Getting comfortable, she smiled and opened the book. It was her most favoritist story in the whole wide world, mainly because her mommy had told her that she'd gotten her name from it, not the one her aunt always called her, but the one her daddy had always used. "*Once upon a time, there were three bears...*"

Chapter One

“Get your fucking paws off me,” Goldie told the man that had been her friend, up until the moment when he decided he *owned* her ass while they camped. “I don’t know who the fucking hell you think you are, but you are not anyone that has any right to touch me.”

“Come on, Goldie, you know you want me every bit as much as I want you,” Barrett told her as he reached his big meaty hands to her. “Come on, babe, come crawl into this sleeping bag with me.”

“What part of no do you not understand?” Goldie’s brown eyes were wide, shock registering on her face. “I mean seriously?” She should have never fucking came with them. She knew what a bad idea it was the moment she saw only four guys and no other girls. She’d thought their wives and girlfriends were going, they’d even alluded to meeting them out at the campsite. Damn it, she really should have verified that, called the women instead of just believing these assholes. But it had sounded right when they’d told her they’d pick her up after a meeting and then meet the ladies out at the site. According to Barrett, their wives and girlfriends had gone out earlier to secure a campsite. It had all been a fucking lie. Her first clue should have been why were they going on a normal workday, but when she questioned it, the number one asshole had made a lame excuse about they all had worked so hard on the last project and they needed a break. *Dumb, Goldie, dumb.*

“Fuck you, tweedle dick.” She turned on her heel with her long blond hair flying out around her, grabbed her backpack, and stomped into the woods with her flashlight shining brightly. She would rather walk the fuck out on her own, as apposed to staying here and putting up with this shit.

“Don’t worry, she will be back,” the male voice carried on the breeze to her and made her stiffen. “All it’s going to take is some fucking rabbit or something to scurry across the path and then the bitch will be back. If she’s lucky we will just fuck her senseless, and she will be back in our good graces. Or we can tie her ass down and make her like it.” The laughter that followed the suggestion made her skin crawl. The nerve of the arrogant prick.

“Yeah, keep telling yourself that you fat sadistic pervert,” she muttered and stomped further away from the campfire and the assholes wanking off around it. Goldie walked for what felt like hours and finally came out the other side of the woods into a clearing.

The home that appeared before her was maddeningly beautiful. The steel and glass structure took her breath away with its simplicity and stark modern beauty. Walking up to the door, she glimpsed inside at old world charm and modern day wonder. The furniture was massive and looked like it had been carved from huge chunks of trees. The paintings on the walls looked like masterpieces, and she was stunned such a marvelous home was in the middle of freaking nowhere. It reminded her of something she just couldn't put her finger on it.

Lifting her hand, she used the brass knocker to knock on the door, frowning because there was no doorbell. “Who has a place like this, and no doorbell?” she asked softly. Ohhh, maybe a recluse serial killer who was gonna chop her into little pieces. She bit her lip and tried to decide if she should make a run for it and get to the main road, Goldie would at least feel more comfortable if someone saw her and could tell the police the last place she had been. Damn it, she needed to think about this for a second, maybe she should throw something in the woods so if someone was looking for her she would be found. Of course, it could be her asshole so called friends. Damn she hated it when she was indecisive.

When the skies lit up with violent lightning and the thunder shook the ground she stood on she knocked again, louder this time. When the rain began to fall in buckets from the skies, she screeched and knocked loudly again. Forget serial killer, she would rather kick his ass, and tie him up in a closet, she could do it, she took self-defense classes. Anything was better than this shit.

“Oh fuck it,” she muttered and reached for the door handle, pressing the lever, surprised when it opened. “Holy crap. How freaky,” she said with the shake of her head, and all but fell into the home. “Okay. I won't go any further than right here. I need space to fight.” She wrapped her arms around herself and rocked back and forth on her feet, hoping whoever lived here would understand her just walking right into their home, if they were normal. Yeah, she was going to have her ass handed to her by the cops she was sure, but it was better than being out in the middle of a rainstorm. Or,

sliced into little pieces, she figured the chance of being reported to cops seemed the better choice.

She looked out the window as the storm grew in intensity, wincing as hail began to pelt the windows. That was when she saw the kitchen and sighed. “Oh man, whatever they cooked smells so good,” she mumbled. Screw it, she was fucked either way, at least she would have a stomach full.

Before she knew it, she was walking into the kitchen and pulling the first plate of food toward herself. Taking a bite of the food, she quickly spat it into her hand. “Holy fucking shit that was hot.” The spices on the food were like weapons of mass destruction. Maybe they had different tastes, she shrugged.

She pulled the next plate to her and took a bite, again wrinkling her nose. “Maybe plate one and plate two need to marry.” The second plate was bland, so damn bland that it made her feel ill. “Good lord, listen to me.” She shook her head and rose. “Unbelievable,” she muttered and left the kitchen before trying the third tempting plate of food. “Already I’m going to jail. Jesus, no need to make a complete idiot of myself.”

She stepped into the living room and ran her hand lovingly over the back of the couch, a deep sigh escaping her as she did so. “Freaking beautiful impressive pieces,” she whispered and took a seat on the sofa. Snuggling up against the back cushion, she sighed, “Perfect.”

She sat there for what felt like forever, watching the rain as it pelted down the windows. Rising finally, she stretched and yawned, “All right. Well, since I’ve already tried out their food and couch I might as well check out the bathroom and beds.” If she was going to go to jail, or be killed, she might as well live it up while she could.

“I just hope whoever lives here isn’t some of the shoot-first-and-call-the-cops-later kind of people, or on the other hand slice her throat first, she wanted to at least try to put up a fight,” she muttered.

With her hand on the banister, she walked up the stairs, smiling at the feeling of the hand carved wood under her hands. This home was spectacular; it seemed as if someone had cracked open her head and pulled out everything she liked. “Maybe that’s it. Maybe I just fell while getting away from idiots one through four and I’m lying in a ravine somewhere with my head split open.” She giggled and shook her head. “I’m an idiot,” she muttered.

When she walked into the first bedroom, she smiled. “Wow, talk about modern.” The room was modern to the ninth degree. It had a low platform bed that frankly looked, “Far too hard.” She completed her thought aloud. Everything about the room screamed order, modern, control.

She walked out of the bedroom and into the one across the hall from it. “Oh my, I seriously hope this is the guest room.” The room was done up in some seriously girly pinks and fuchsias that frankly made her head hurt. Either, a female lived here, or a very strange man.

She stepped out of the room and shook her head. Seeing three more doors, she opened the next one and walked in. “Perfect,” she whispered and touched the massive bed, which dominated the room. The bed looked big enough to hold a whole party in it. Taking off her shoes, she jumped up onto the bed and sighed. Closing her eyes, she whispered, “This is just right.” Grabbing one of the pillows, she hugged it close, fully intending on getting up and out of there, but she was so tired she closed her eyes and instead fell asleep.

Chapter Two

Slamming the passenger side door as he slid in, Arkadios growled, “Next time she calls I’m bloody well not going with you lot.”

“She’s seventy-five, Ark,” Mahon chuckled from his spot in the back of the SUV.

“She fucking grabbed my ass!”

Laughing nearly hysterically, Torben took six tries to get the key into the ignition. “She happens to like how tight and perky it is,” he teased, quoting Mrs. Riley. “She is a connoisseur of asses after all.”

Mahon snorted as he wheezed in laughter, “She’s had seventy-five years to become an expert after all,” he gasped.

Wiping at the tears on his cheeks, Torben looked at Arkadios and burst out howling even harder.

“You two are fucking assholes,” he growled at them. “Never fucking again. You know she fucking calls us to come and fix shit so she can make passes at us.”

“Again, I will say it once more, she’s seventy-five, Arkadios. She’s lonely,” Torben said, wiping his eyes as he got himself under some semblance of control. “Mr. Riley was her world. They came from the old country together. And you know her kids never visit except at Christmas and it’s the only time she gets to see the grandkids.”

“No excuse for her to play grab ass with me!”

Mahon leaned forward, putting his arms on the back of the front seat between them, “Dude, she likes you,” he grinned. Ducking back when Arkadios came at him, he laughed.

“Quit harassing him,” Torben chuckled softly, pulling out of Mrs. Riley’s yard. “You know he has no compunction about ripping out your throat.”

“He won’t, he knows without me he’d be bored silly inside of a week. I’m the comic relief,” Mahon grinned, sitting up again. Leaning back in the seat, he gave him a cocky grin in the rear view mirror, “And so would you, you love my sense of humor. You two would mope around without me in your lives.”

The growl Ark gave left the statement in question and had Torben chuckling once more. “Okay, so we got Mrs. Riley settled for the next week at least. What’s on the grid we need to take care of?”

“We have the meeting with the Druthers tomorrow at one,” Mahon said, pulling his phone from his pocket reading off their lists of things. “Then we have to meet with the crew by three to check the progress on the new place by the river. At six we have the reception to attend at the music hall so we can schmooze the big wigs.”

Mahon tapped at his phone, “Following day, Torben, you need to get out to the new site on the other side of town by nine to supervise the ground breaking with Mrs. and Mr. Reynolds. It’s the big log and rock place we’re putting in for their retirement in two years and counting, according to the missus.”

“Which she also says can’t happen soon enough,” Ark muttered, shifting to lean against the door. “Apparently, Mrs. Reynolds does not love his rather fly-by-night attitude and wants to nail him down to one place.”

“Can’t really blame her if even half the rumors about him are true,” Torben commented before looking in the rear view again. “Keep going, Mahon.”

“After that, T, you will have to go to the club for your meeting with Mrs. Johansson about her renovations to the old Walberry place she bought. That should take you through lunch given she’ll want to discuss your love life.”

“You mean lack thereof,” Ark snorted.

“And recommend every woman and girl she knows between the age of eighteen and fifty who would love to have you around. More ways than one,” Mahon grinned at him. “I have to do the books that morning, so we can hand everything over to the accountant for the most evil time of the year—tax season. And from this it looks as if Arkadios has the morning off, but will be doing a quick stop at the site by the lake before we meet him in the city for the two o’clock meeting at the office. We still have to find a new assistant who won’t run screaming whenever one of us loses our cool.”

Both he and Torben looked at Ark who just grinned. “If Ark would stop growling at them every damned time they tried to do anything, we’d keep them longer. What we need to do is find a big ass male who will just punch him in the nose when he growls.”

“Yeah, but then we’d have a body to bury when Ark goes all hairy on his ass and kills him,” Mahon pointed out, leaning on the back of the seat. “What we need is some cute little thing that has no fear of smacking him with a rolled up newspaper. He won’t kill a female but we really need to find one with a fucking spine.”

“Good point,” Torben had to admit as he sped along the road toward the house the three of them had constructed. Right after they’d made their first million, they had bought the land, and two years later broke ground. Many found it too cold from the outside but once inside, they saw the true genius about their design. It’s what they did.

Arkadios was the guy who knew just where to put a building. He knew where to drive the structure deep and keep it strong. He was brute strength. Which, when you were six foot eight with a muscle packed wide frame, it was pretty obvious he was the one people went to when they needed something hefted. His black short cut hair, dark brown eyes, and deeply tanned skin added to the image he had and one he cultivated to ensure people gave him a wide path.

Mahon was their money guy. He wine and dined people and got into their heads. He found out what they really wanted and needed in a home. People felt comfortable around him, his looks helped with the persona. He had dirty blond wavy hair and deeply tanned skin. The swimmer physique gave him a surferesque look even if he was six foot six and much too tall for the sport. A relaxed personality, calm blue eyes, and an easy smile made him the perfect one of the three of them to talk to people, calm them and get them to agree to whatever the men wanted to do.

Then there was Torben. He could stand on a plot of land right where Ark had picked the spot and feel the building around him. He was the designer. At six foot six, dark brown shaggy hair to his collar and a rich tan along with his deep green eyes that were often focused on things others just didn’t see, gave him a dreamer quality. He was also right in the middle of the personalities of the three men, not as tense and rough as Arkadios, but definitely nowhere near as relaxed and easy going as Mahon. He was the balance and often mediator when Mahon got Ark going on one topic or another.

The three of them handled all phases of the construction with their fifty man and woman crew. Once the building was up, it was left to the designers who they employed or the ones the client preferred.

Turning onto the road to their place, he had to smile. It was a giant glass structure, and yet it wasn't cold. It just seemed to fit into nature. From within the glass walls it felt like nature was crawling right up to them.

Parking out front, he slid out and stretched. "Alright, guys, we got shit to do tomorrow."

"Barbecue," Ark said and got nods from them. "I'll get the steaks if you guys want to get the rest ready."

"I'll clean up from earlier. Since we ditched lunch I'm thinking we need to get those steaks on the grill pretty damned fast." Mahon looked at them as they pushed into the house.

They never locked the door, who the hell was going to steal something out in the middle of nowhere? You couldn't see the house from the road, and no one coming through the woods was going to be able to haul anything of worth out of it. Especially since most of it was nailed down and heavily alarmed. The house could be turned into a lock-box in under ten seconds.

Part of why they didn't mind the glass windows, was because it wasn't actually glass. A product, which didn't chip or ding but could quite literally stop a bullet. Chuckling, Torben stepped into the house, then came to a stop right behind the others and inhaled.

"Someone's in here," Arkadios snarled around fangs that already filled his mouth.

"Calm down, Ark," Torben put his hand on his very volatile friend's shoulder. "I'm going upstairs, you two check down here. Do not hurt the person. They could be looking for assistance or help. Don't jump to conclusions either," he warned and headed for the stairs yelling over his shoulder. "And don't eat them, Ark! Mahon keep an eye on him."

Jogging up the steps, he checked all the rooms, wincing at the bright pink room that was Arkadios's niece's room when she stayed with them. Closing that door, he kept moving on light feet until he was standing over his bed and staring down at the little human woman. Growling low in his throat, he leaned in close. "Don't you know it's dangerous to crawl into a strange man's bed, little girl?" he whispered next to her ear.

Chapter Three

Goldie's scream caught in her throat when the growl and deep voice spoke. She jerked up in the bed, her forehead connecting with his and dropping her back on the bed. "Son of a bitch," she muttered. "Damn it, you could have at least pulled back."

"Why?" he asked, staring at her. "You're in my bed, in my home, and I don't recall inviting you in. Besides, it didn't even phase me," he murmured before his eyes began a roam down her body. "Care to explain why you're hiding out in my bed?"

Goldie narrowed her eyes, so far, she was still alive, and he wasn't on the phone calling the police. She figured honestly was her best policy at this point. If she did the crying thing, for sympathy, she may get on his last nerve and he would kill her. Some guys just didn't respond to a good sympathy act. He may be overbearing, but she didn't feel like he was gonna hurt her, she felt and instinctive pull towards him.

"Because it was comfortable," she said with a shrug. "Look, I just wanted in from the rain. I will pay you back for the food I ate. I just had to get away from some perverted assholes who thought that by me agreeing to go camping with them, I was agreeing to share their sleeping bags. It wasn't what it meant. I just simply wanted to come to the forest. I love being out in nature and while I typically spend my weekends outdoors, I've never really been able to come to the forest because I don't have a car. So when they offered this overnight camping trip even if on a work day, I jumped at it without thinking it all the way through." Simple and pure truth, Goldie hoped this worked.

Nodding, he finally pushed back and sat on the edge of the bed. "I'm guessing you managed to lose them since you don't appear injured," he said. "As for the food, don't worry about it. You needed it and it's all that matters." He stared at her for a time before getting to his feet, "I'm Torben by the way. Bathroom is through there if you want to grab a shower. We're throwing steaks on the grill if you're at all interested. After dinner you can tell us just who you came out with, what all they suggested, and where last you saw them. Food will be ready in half an hour. Beer is in the fridge if

you want one, and we'll be out back." Pivoting on his heel, he left the room pulling the door closed behind him.

She looked at the door after he left, her mouth fell open as she did so. "Holy shit what just happened?" she asked herself but scooted to the edge of the bed. Shrugging, she said, "What the hell, why not?" She moved to the bathroom and decided to go ahead and shower, she might as well in case they decided to have her arrested anyway. She would be in lockup for a while and who knew how long she would have to go without a shower. If they killed her, at least she would be fresh, maybe that would cover the death smell a little. Besides, she still felt that trust, Goldie was pretty sure he would not follow her, and the door had a lock, which she secured and prayed he didn't have a key. For good measure, she moved the chair in the corner and braced it under the handle.

Stripping out of her clothes, she looked at the back of the bathroom door and snagged the robe that was hanging there as if it was just waiting for her to put it on. After finding a towel, she then got into the shower and let the hot water cascade over her body before getting clean.

Goldie paused on the stairs. She heard three distinct voices—all male. Well shit, had he invited his murder partners to torture and kill her? Maybe it was the police he called and they were drinking coffee waiting to arrest her. Her first instinct was to run, but she knew that would be wrong if it were the police. Goldie had to face her fate either way, she would go down swinging. Pulling the robe she was wearing closer and tighter, she took a deep breath, stepped down the last couple of steps, and turned so she could walk into the kitchen. Lifting a hand, she said, "Hi." *Holy hell, these men are smokin' hot*, was all she could think.

"Our unexpected house guest," Torben said to the guys. "Arkadios and Mahon, this is... Well, honestly I have no idea. Woman that was in my bed, this is Arkadios and Mahon," he indicated each of the males. "How do you like your steak?" he asked her as he moved to the stove to pull out the corn on the cob, dropping them into a bowl.

"My name is Jacilda. However, everyone calls me Goldie. I prefer Goldie to Jacilda because the name just frustrates the hell out of me." She shrugged. "And what's your name, guy whose bed I woke up in?" she shot back at the massive man.

“Torben,” he said moving the pot off the stove. “Grab a beer or something else from the fridge,” he told her.

Goldie nodded and walked to the refrigerator, “Just to be clear, are you calling the cops, or are you serial killers. Want to make sure we are all on the same page here.”

The three men looked at her with an amused expression. Torben laughed aloud and said. “Neither, we are just trying to figure out how you found us.”

“Why is she running around in your robe, Torben?” Mahon asked curiously, darting looks back and forth between them. “Cause I have to say this is a shocker honestly. Not that I mind the company for dinner given she’s prettier than you two, but still totally shocked.”

“Because he scared the bejesus out of me and felt bad, so he told me I could use his shower,” Goldie said as she reached into the fridge and pulled out a beer. “I’m the one who broke into your house. Although, I didn’t technically break into the house since the door was unlocked. Why the hell was it? Don’t you guys lock your doors?”

“Never have,” Arkadios said, inhaling deeply while quietly watching her, his arms crossed over his chest, his senses went into overdrive when he smelled her. “Most people around these parts know about us and know better than to steal shit. And if they don’t know about us and steal something, we track their asses down to introduce ourselves. Up close and personal.”

Goldie stared back at the big one speaking. He could crush her with his arms no doubt but she had just showered and he kept sniffing as if she smelled bad. It was kinda pissing her off. Forgetting she was in their house illegally, wearing a bathrobe, she stood her ground.

“Well, I wasn’t planning on stealing shit,” she muttered and got right back into his face. “If you didn’t notice, it was raining cats and damn dogs out there. I was wet. I was cold. This place was empty so deal with it, big boy. You have a guest even if it is unexpected so get over yourself.”

When Arkadios growled, Mahon put a hand on his shoulder, “And you are a lovely guest. We were not accusing you of anything,” he smacked Arkadios when he growled again. “But he is right, means you’re not from around here. Which means you have a story to tell,” he smiled. “So tell.”

“Like I told you upstairs, I really wanted to come to the forest.” She began, “You see I don’t drive except for when it is a necessity. I get panic attacks when I’m behind the wheel of a car so I figure it’s better that way.”

The inability to control the other drivers was what made her go bat-shit crazy and panic. “A friend of mine from work said he and some friends were coming camping overnight and invited me. I figured there would be no issues. Boy was I wrong,” she mumbled. “Assholes brought me to be their fucking amusement—literally, so I told them to fuck off. I told them I would rather be mauled by fucking bears than stay and be their plaything.”

Torben snorted and beer shot out of his nose before he started choking and coughing all at the same time.

“Well there are only a few bears in these woods, so as long as you don’t poke them they won’t eat you,” Mahon said with a sneaky looking grin.

Ark inhaled deep and then grunted, “Steaks should be done,” and headed out the back door to the patio.

“And that is our cue to go out and pull up a chair,” Mahon said, moving to pound Torben on the back. “Geez man, pull in some air. You’re starting to look a little pasty and blue all at the same time, seriously not your color.”

Goldie snorted and shook her head, “Are you brothers or something? With the easy way that you tease, I would think you were either brothers, very best of friends, or lovers.” She hoped that it wasn’t the last one because they were seriously damn hot, and she wouldn’t mind being stuck with them for a day or five. She was worried about that pick girly room. “And do you think I will be able to use your phone? My cell has crappy reception out here, and I really do need to call for a cab sometime soon.”

“There are no cabs out here,” Torben said once he managed to pull air into his lungs. “And the closest cell tower is nearly six miles from here thus the spotty if not nonexistent service. We’re best friends and partners in business. This,” he waved a hand at the house while Mahon grabbed the corn and left them alone, “was one of our projects, a personal one. We bought the land once we had the money, and then broke ground and started to build it between jobs, on weekends, and in the dead of the night. Pretty much any chance we had we were out here putting it together. Phone’s on the wall there,” he pointed past her shoulder, “if you want to call someone else to come out and get you. Or we can give you a lift into town in the morning when we head in for our meetings and such.”

“The morning would be fine, if you guys don’t mind that is?” Goldie asked quietly. A little embarrassed that she didn’t have any close friends to call or any family left, being alone in the world sucked. And even with the hot men being so nice, she really hoped she wasn’t setting herself up for the

same situation as with Barrett and the rest of the jerks. "If you do, I can make a call but I would really rather not have the 'I told you so' debate with any girlfriend anytime soon if you wouldn't mind," she grumbled." "You're welcome to stay, Goldie," he told her. "Grab your beer and let's get out there before they eat all the meat." Snagging his bottle, he tipped his head. "Come on," he said and headed for the back door. Stepping out he held it and waited on her to decide.

She moved outside with him and to the table that was laden with food. Taking the seat offered to her, she settled in and smiled. "Thank you for letting me stay with you guys, even though I did just kinda broke in and all that." She lifted her beer for a toast and said, "To your hospitality."

Tipping their heads, they began piling food on all of the plates. Passing her one of the plates, Arkadios eyed her before nodding and settling into his chair.

"So, Goldie, what do you do to keep yourself busy?" Mahon asked her curiously. "School, work, finding yourself in the woods without a vehicle?" He grinned.

"I'm actually a personal secretary," she told him. "Not very glamorous, I know, but I love it. I'm able to keep people in line that need to be kept in line. I don't take shit and they know it." Although, more than likely, her job would be forfeited as soon as she got back since asshole number one who brought her to the woods was the boss. "I work for an architectural firm that has a division for builders as well. So yeah, I kinda know what you guys do." She had a feeling she knew the men too. Their names were sparking some memory but she couldn't fetch it out of her mind...yet.

They all looked at one another and brows went up before she was the focus of three pairs of eyes. Torben licked his lips, "If you're ever looking for a job, we have a position continuously open. Ark tends to scare off our assistants, so we've been hunting desperately for another. So far we haven't had much luck and beyond putting a muzzle on him, we aren't sure anyone will survive his snarky growly ass." Only half joking about the muzzle.

"Damn, now I remember why you seem familiar." Her eyes went wide and she began to snicker. "My bosses hate you guys. Take it as a compliment because they are utter assholes and they don't understand honesty and integrity. I've been looking for another job for like a year and can't find one. I think they have blocked me at every turn because I'm damn good at what I do, plus I know a lot about their dealings."

“Who are your bosses?” Mahon asked, leaning forward. “And do tell us more of all the reasons why they hate us,” he grinned eagerly. “Come on, dish. Tell us all the rumors and such. Anything and everything they’ve ever said about how they hate us.”

“Mersberger and Associates is the company I work for.” She snickered and said, “One of you stole one of their dates one night, and I guess that was what sparked their hatred for you. From then, they keep trying to undercut you.” Blushing she added, “I might have lost a message or two from their people on the zoning commissions when you guys were putting in sealed bids.” She wasn’t proud of it, but she didn’t believe in all the foul play that was happening. “So I seriously doubt you guys would want me working for you. I have a very, very strong sense of right and wrong, and don’t mind losing messages or rerouting couriers if it should happen.”

“Actually, I think you’d be perfect for the position,” Torben said and he looked over to Arkadios who was staring at her. “Ark, Mahon and I are on board with giving you a job. You know it has to be unanimous, what do you say?”

Chewing a piece of steak, the big bear nodded after a moment, “Yeah I’m cool with it,” he said. “As long as she doesn’t piss her pants every time we look at her.”

“Only one guy did that, Ark,” Mahon said with a shake of his head.

“So the job is yours if you want it, Goldie,” Torben said, looking her way again.

Leaning in and bracing her elbows on the table, she looked at each one of them. “Good thing for you guys that I really don’t scare all that easily, huh? Or is it good for me?” She shrugged. “Besides, if you give me any shit, I will roll up a newspaper and smack the back of your head to make you shut up and listen to me.”

Torben and Mahon were grinning wide and then burst out laughing. “I hate you two. I have no idea why we’re fucking friends at all,” Ark muttered, glaring at them. “You two planned this, you told her didn’t you?” he asked, leaning in closer. “You did!”

“Planned what? Huh?” Goldie was completely and totally lost. “You guys seriously act more like brothers than friends. That’s why you guys are friends. You are all three so much alike it’s not even funny. Even I can see that, and I’ve only just met you.”

“Ignore him,” Torben said, throwing a kernel of corn at his friend. “He’s just remembering something Mahon commented on this morning. Mahon said we needed to find an assistant for the office; one that wouldn’t be afraid of Ark’s mood swings and would just roll up a paper and whack him. He,” he pointed at Arkadios, “is under the delusion that we told you before now and you’re toying with him.”

Goldie looked from one man to the other and then began to snicker. Seeing Arkadios’s face thundering she began to full out laugh, she couldn’t help herself. “Oh man, that’s utterly and completely priceless. You. Oh that’s too funny.” She snickered again, “No they didn’t tell me about that. It really is something I would do without question if you got out of line. And no, you don’t scare me. To be honest with you, you should scare the living shit out of me but I feel rather comfortable around you,” shaking her head, not really understanding the instant attraction or the feeling that she has known them before. The whole situation was absurd.

“Oh, I really like her,” Mahon chuckled, shaking his head with a huge grin at Arkadios. “Come on, Ark, you have to admit, she’s got a set on her.” He looked to her and explained, “By this point, most people are pissing their pants and running for the nearest exit.”

“Well, good thing for you I’m not most people, huh?” Goldie asked and looked back at Arkadios. “I don’t want to fight with you, I really don’t; however, I won’t let you run over me either. I give as good as I get—in all things. Just keep that in mind.”

Torben threw another kernel at Ark and grinned when the man caught it and threw it back. “He’s a pain in the ass and snarly but you’ll eventually like him, or try to kill him every chance you get. With Arkadios there really are only the two options,” he said to her, flicking the kernel right back across the table.

She snickered, unable to help herself. Leaning forward, she braced her elbows on the table and asked, “All right, I have to ask because it’s driving me crazy. Why the headache-inducing pink room?” Torben and Mahon snickered and look to Ark to answer.

“My niece chose the color and happens to love it, is there a problem?” Arkadios asked her with a lifted brow. “She’s six and happens to love pink at the moment. Two years ago, it was neon yellow. Who knows what the hell the next color will be.”

“Oh, you poor man.” She reached out and touched his hand with hers, smiling as she gave it a squeeze. “I think that it’s sweet you are willing to cater to her like that. It makes me see the man you are instead of the growling beast you are putting forward. I like the man, you should let him show often,” Goldie eyes twinkled for the big guy that would bow to wants of a six year old.

The three shared a look before Arkadios looked at her, “Darling, you are in for one hell of a shocker,” he told her, pulling his hand out of her reach. Snagging his beer bottle, he took a drink as he watched her carefully.

Shrugging, Goldie went back to eating once more. “Yeah, well, it’s pretty hard to shock me,” she told them simply. “I mean like seriously hard. I think I’ve just about seen it all in life, which is sad if you think about it.”

“Oh she did not just say that, did she?” Mahon asked and laughed when he saw two heads nodding. “Goldie, my dear, if you survive a week at the office, we’ll show you that you haven’t seen everything and there are still really shocking things out in the world. But you have to survive snarly and bossy here for a full week without once threatening him. Also without losing your cool one time.”

“Does the rolled up newspaper count as threatening, or is that just a promise of things to come?” Goldie shot back without hesitation. “Because it’s not a threat when I fully intend on following through. Right?” She was having the time of her life with these three men. Shock that she had been in their house and not once had they made a pass at her. She hadn’t worked at the office around Barrett two days and he was making snide remarks that he tried to pass off as just for fun because the jerk was married. Thinking back on that, she really didn’t know why she would agree to go camping with them. Other than when they asked and told her where they were coming, it was as if the woods called to her. Shaking her head, she focused back on the conversation.

“It only counts as a threat as long as you don’t follow through. But if you follow through at least once, we’ll consider it justice,” Torben told her. Looking toward Arkadios, he grinned, “And well deserved justice too. So, other topics now,” he turned his head back so he was looking her way. “We will take you into the office in the morning so you can get a feel for things and meet the others. We have a couple of meetings you should come along with us on. This way you can see how we do business, and know what we expect of our employees as well.”

“We have a meeting with the Druthers’ at one. They are hoping to get us to build them their new offices in town. It’s basically going to end up being their corporate office while their former one becomes just an offshoot. They are looking for smaller towns feel while still having the class of big city life. Then, at three, we have to go out to a current project,” Mahon explained. “There you’ll meet one of the construction crews and be able to see how that is handled.”

“At six, we have a party to attend at the Music Hall,” Arkadios muttered. “Moneyed people with no sense, and too often bad taste in clothes and scents they drown themselves in. But it’s how we keep in touch with that side of the business so we need to be there.”

“Right. Which means you need to come as well,” Torben commented to her. “It’s black tie, so if you need to pick something up to wear it’ll have to be done in the morning. We only plan to be at the construction site on the lake for an hour, giving us a two hour window to get back to town, changed, and over to the event. Unfortunately, it never ever works that way, so plan on getting everything ready you can in the morning before we go over to meet the Druthers at the restaurant in town, it’s twenty minutes from the office to there. Questions?”

“Sounds good. For the morning outing, will I be fine in jeans and a t-shirt with boots? I don’t have anything else in my pack. For the black tie, we would need to stop by my place so I can grab something suitable to wear. And yes, before you ask, I have something I could wear. Also, how many changes of clothes will I need? Where are the offices so I will be able to show up for work the day after tomorrow? You guys will be able to drop me off at home tomorrow, right?”

“We’ll run by the office before we go to your place. I’ll have to drop Ark and Mahon off. Mahon has paperwork to finish,” he grinned over at his friend. “Both of their vehicles are still there. That’s why there weren’t any cars here when you arrived. I’ll take you to your place and you can come back to the office once you’re ready. We’ll give you the tour before heading over to meet the Druthers.”

“Sounds like a plan to me.” She grinned and added, “And I get to give my notice, effective immediately of course, which makes me happy.” She paused and looked at them, “And what kind of pay and benefits will come with this position?”

“Full benefits,” Ark told her and then named a sum for the pay. “If that works for you of course,” he commented while she sat gaping at him. “If it’s not enough, I’m sure you could convince us to find a little more in the budget. But you’ll have to wait out the three month probationary time before we even think about it.”

“I completely understand. You’re giving more than make at my current job.” Which was actually less than she deserved. “Then it looks as if you have a new employee. And I promise I won’t smack you too many times. Just when you irritate me.”

“You’ll have your current pay during the probationary time and then we’ll give you the raise if you survive,” he told her. “But if you smack me with the paper, expect me to take it from you and give you as good as I got. I do not play favorites with anyone.”

“Deal. I smack you and you smack me, with the paper of course, as long as you don’t ever raise your hand to me. You do, and I will likely have to kick you in the balls. Period,” she said simply. “However, I don’t think I will ever have that issue with you guys. Something tells me that you will never raise your hand to me at all, and that means a great deal to me.”

“Why would we?” Mahon asked, shaking his head and leaning his elbows on the table. “Hitting a woman is wrong. We would rather die than to ever strike a woman for any reason. Ark can be an asshole,” he rolled his eyes when the man in question growled at him. “Come on, dude, you are an asshole. But even he has a code of honor.”

“Yeah, but I have a feeling most of his ass-holeish-ness is because he doesn’t suffer fools lightly. I know I’ve been told I’m a bitch on more than one occasion, and it’s because I won’t put up with bull. As for the hitting...” She shrugged, “Some things you never outgrow, no matter what.”

“Well, we don’t hit women,” Torben said quietly, reaching over to touch her hand with light fingers. “We may hit one another or go a little rougher when we play a round of rugby with the guys, but that’s it. Women are to be protected and treasured at all costs. End of story.”

Goldie blushed and nodded, “I like that. A lot. I don’t mind you guys being rough with each other. Hell, I will even wait on the sidelines with the first-aid kit.” Mostly because she loved half-naked men playing rugby—there was just something seriously fucking hot about that. “And cheer for you guys, sometimes,” she teased.

Snorting, Arkadios shook his head at her, “I have a feeling she’ll be rooting for the other team,” he said, leaning forward to finish his meal. “But we’ll test it on Saturday if you don’t have plans,” he told her. “We have another game and we’ll test your loyalties then.”

Goldie grinned, “Depends. How hot are they? ‘Cause you guys are drool worthy, so it all depends on if these guys are like Greek God or whatever.” She liked teasing these men, Arkadios especially. She knew how silly that was, but there it was.

“They are pussies,” Mahon said with a snort. “But we will wipe the ground with them and then go for pizza and beer in celebration of our victory.”

“We’re playing Burgess Energy,” Torben said with a crooked smirk.

“Or we’ll be in the hospital. Are you fucking kidding me?” Mahon started at him. “They are fucking animals! Sorry for the language, Goldie, but damn it, who the hell set that meet up?”

“Arkadios did. He sets up all the meets, Mahon,” Torben said his grin full now. “We’ll actually have a good meet, work up a sweat, and grind them into the dirt.”

“Only if we don’t all die,” Mahon groaned. “Great. The first match our new assistant gets to see and we’re going to be creamed. Bring the really large first aid kit, will you please, Goldie? Those freakin’ tigers latch on and you can never shake them off.”

Goldie couldn’t help but laugh and shake her head. “Oh, I have a feeling this is going to be utterly and totally priceless. I can’t wait,” she said happily. “And don’t worry, I will cheer for you guys. I rather like you guys.”

“She’s only saying that because she hasn’t seen Brandon yet,” Arkadios commented, pushing his plate away. Wiping his face and hands, he looked to her, “I have a feeling once you get a look at him, you’ll be flipping sides and cheering for those losers.”

Goldie winked at Arkadios, “I don’t flip sides as easily as you are thinking. How about this, I will tell you if I’m going to be flipping sides before I cheer for them. Besides, Brandon would have to be fucking drop-dead gorgeous and people like that typically know it and are assholes because of it. Nope, I think I know just who I will cheer for.”

“Hey, that’s why you two have such a hate on,” Mahon said and grinned at Ark’s nasty look. “You’re both so full of yourselves the egos bang into

one another, and you get all..." That was as far as he got before he had to scramble out of his chair and run. Arkadios was hot on his heels as Mahon howled with laughter.

Groaning, Torben slouched in his seat, "Tell me when Ark catches him so I can go break them up."

Snickering, Goldie shook her head, "I think it's great. They are like a couple of overgrown kids and that's actually nice," she murmured. "So tell me, Torben, are you always the peacekeeper of the family? Are you the one who breaks up the kids when they begin to fight?"

"Not usually, but Mahon seems to have a death wish most days of the week. His favorite target is Arkadios since he has a short fuse. That and he has almost zero sense of humor," he looked around the chair as the two raced by the deck, Mahon still shouting things at Ark. "I swear, you'd think he'd learn. Arkadios is a stand-up guy, but really has nearly no sense of humor on some things. Brandon has no sense of humor either, he is one of them. Ever since our first rugby match against Burgess Energy, it's been war."

"Huh, how odd is that? Well it doesn't matter. He will soon see I'm totally on your guys' side in this. Let's just hope you guys will be able to beat them because if not, I'm sure that will have Arkadios even more upset."

"Well just expect it to be a hell of a lot more violent and bloody than your typical rugby match. We play by slightly different and more liberal rules when we play Burgess Energy. They are totally down with that by the way," he smiled. Turning, he watched as the others streaked by again, Mahon laughing and Arkadios growling profanity at his back. "As bad as Ark can be when Mahon gets on his case and tweaks his tail, it's nothing compared to what you'll see Saturday."

That had her grinning and she shook her head. "You guys are too funny. I like the easy way about you, all of you. I really think you are all rather adorable. I know it's probably not really a word you would like to have used in reference to you, but oh, well that is how it is. I think that's why I feel totally safe with you guys. Weird, huh?"

Staring at her, he shrugged and got to his feet, "Yep, weird definitely. It's not a description I've ever heard in relation to any of us." Gathering up plates, he stacked the dishes of extra food and tipped his head, "Can you grab the bottles, and get the door?" he asked her, lifting all the dishes up.

“Sure. No problem.” Grabbing the bottles, Goldie headed for the door, holding it open for him and the others. “Do you have a key to be able to lock your house up or do you just leave it as is?” She knew that was likely a stupid question, especially since she had just walked right into their home. “‘Cause I want to be the only person who drops in on ya’ll if you wouldn’t mind.”

“We have a full security system that rivals the White House,” he said as he moved to the sink. “And yeah, we can lock up the house when we feel the need. We’ll get you a key if you survive the probationary period since you’ll have to come out here at some point or another. Whether it’s running errands or dropping off stuff for us on the rare occasion we’re out of town.”

“Why didn’t you lock it when I found my way here then? Not that I’m complaining, because I’m not. I’m actually really happy you didn’t because it meant I didn’t have to stay out in the rain when I found my way here. And why do you keep saying if I make it through the probationary period? Have you really had that many people quit on you?”

Chuckling evilly, he shot her a toothy grin, “Sixty-three at last count,” he told her. Laughing when she just stood there gaping at him, he shrugged, “We’re a little tough to work with on occasion. Not just Arkadios. All of us. We all have our moments where you’ll want to beat us bloody. As to the house,” he looked around, “everything of value is nailed down and hardwired into the security system. If anything is moved more than three inches, the system fires up, and locks the house down tight. We only really lock up when we have to go out of town.”

“Ah, that makes sense,” she said when she finally got her mind wrapped around that comment, “Really? Sixty-three? How the hell have you guys went through that many assistants? Good lord, really?” She shook her head. “Oh my,” she murmured. “Well I just hope that no matter what, I will be able to stick around with you guys. I actually think I going to quite enjoy it and want I want to do a good job for you.”

“They tend to just explode at us and storm out. Though it may just be the hazing we run them through,” he muttered the last before shrugging. Turning on the water in the sink, he stacked dishes in and shot her a look, “You’ve already got a leg up on the others, Goldie. You’re not afraid to smack Ark and you like rugby, two points in your favor. If you can make half decent coffee and don’t try to kill us in the first week, you’ll probably survive.”

“I am a killer at coffee, as long as you have a good machine that is,” she told him with a grin. “And even if I might try to kill you the first week it doesn’t mean I would miss ya,” she teased. “It’s all good though. Promise. You do have a good machine, right?”

“Top of the line,” he said with a chuckle. “And there are to be no attempts on our lives. Well, Ark you can try to take down. Only because it would be amusing,” he said, adding soap to the water before turning it off a couple moments later. “I know we’ve been teasing you, but your job isn’t all that bad. You’ll mainly be responsible for keeping us on schedule, ensuring we have the documents we need when we need them and as I mentioned earlier, running the occasional errand when we run out of time or aren’t available to do it ourselves. You are not our indentured slave, you will be treated with respect, and if you treat us likewise, we’ll all get along just fine.” Looking at her out of the corner of his eye. He hoped she liked working for them, he didn’t really see them replacing her.

“I think that’s something I can do. I will give you all the respect you deserve, always. If you give me a hard time, just don’t expect me not to give it right back. I mean it. I’m totally one who believes in respect given is respect earned.”

“We can live with that,” he nodded. “We’ll all have days we fucking hate one another. Whether it’s the person’s name, the sound of their voice, or the mere sight, it’s bound to happen. We work long hours together but we also make up for that. You’ll see more when you make it through the first months and you get your contract.”

“Sounds good to me. Well I’m sure whatever happens, happens, no matter what we will always be in this. If you guys give me a good enough job, I’m totally going to stick around as long as possible.”

“We’ll see,” he said and handed her a towel, “You’re drying. Just stack everything to the side. You’ll learn where everything is eventually but for now, just stack it out of the way.” Dunking his hands into the water, he began to wash the plates.

Doing as he asked her, she stacked the dishes off to the side. She began to sing one of the hot songs right now and bumped her hip to his. Smiling happily as she did so. “Come on, sing, and dance with me.”

“I do not sing and I do not dance,” he said, passing her another glass. “You’re on your own with that in this house. Though if you get Mahon

drunk enough he can sort of dance. It's not pretty and usually ends up with him naked, but I figure it at least gives you something."

She snickered and shook her head, "Well it's a good thing then that I won't be living here, huh? Remember I have my own place?" she said with a smile.

"And staff parties, get togethers, the quarterly barbecues we hold out here and any other numerous events," Torben added. "We try to treat those that work with us as a family. Yes, it's a workplace, yes, they are our employees, but we also believe in open door policies and events to nurture a stronger workplace relationship."

"That sounds great. Sounds as if you guys pretty much keep employee moral up and therefore are able to retain them for longer. Well...all except personal assistants that is," she added with a snicker. "And I dance. Love to dance. Can I dance? Hell no, but damned if I don't have a great time trying to do it anyway."

"Well as long as you are enjoying it that's what really matters, right?" he said pulling the drain in the sink. They both turned as a door crashed open and then shut. Mahon came screeching through a moment later and grinned at them before racing off. "For the love of," Torben muttered under his breath. "Not in the house, assholes!" he bellowed when Ark came running in looking ready to murder. "And people wonder why I haven't settled down and had kids," he looked at her.

She couldn't help but to snicker and shake her head, "Well it likely has to do with the fact you are already raising two children as it is." She reached out and grabbed Ark's arm. "Hey, let it go," she said softly and linked her arm with his, pulling him close. "It's all good. Just let him go and I will teach you how to get him when he's not expecting it."

"Don't you dare," Torben said, shaking his head as he pointed a finger her way. "I absolutely refuse to clean blood out of one more thing around here."

"If he'd take it like a man instead of running and screaming like a little girl," Ark muttered. "No offense to your gender, Goldie," he said, hooking his arm around her neck. Pulling her in closer to him, he looked down at her, "You're likely tougher than that pansy ass."

Wrapping her arm around his middle seemed the most natural thing of all as Ark pulled her in closer. "Oh you have no idea. I can give as good as I

get. I refuse to go down without a fight, on anything,” she added with a shrug. “So yep, that’s me.”

Grunting, he nodded and looked to Torben. “We need to go over the blueprints for the site. Morris left a message on the system about a potential issue on the south wall. He wants us to review the prints before we see him tomorrow. He thinks he has a fix, but wants our input without him biasing us in anyway.”

Nodding, Torben finished putting the dishes away, “Alright. You’re welcome to come, Goldie, or if you want, you can watch a movie, TV, or whatever. We’re not putting you to work, but fresh eyes on this cursed job couldn’t hurt either.”

“I am fine with that. As long as you guys don’t mind me wearing what I’m wearing that is,” she added. “Fresh eyes are always a plus. Also this way if you guys want to be rid of me, you can take me by my place and drop me off. Right?”

“You are sticking around,” Torben told her with a grin. “Besides, we have plans laid out and you aren’t allowed to mess with them. You haven’t worked with us long enough for that yet.”

“There is nothing wrong with how you’re dressed,” Arkadios said with a slow smile curling one side of his mouth. “Except it covers way too much of you.”

Goldie laughed and shook her head. “Yeah, well it’s supposed to cover all of me. I don’t want to give a show to my new bosses you know,” she teased him and then gave him a side hug. “Now then, let’s go and get this done so I can get some sleep. I’m a bear if I don’t get enough sleep.”

Ark and Torben both looked at her for long moments before they started to laugh hard. Tugging her along, Arkadios shook his head. “I will bet you have nothing on us,” he chuckled. Guiding her through the lower level, then letting her go into the office on Torben heels. “Over here,” he waved her to the table along one wall.

Goldie had the oddest feeling they were keeping something from her. She would figure it out. She'd only been around not even a full day but since she would be working around them, it wouldn't take her long. She still couldn't place why everything happening to her had some familiarity.

Moving to the table, she frowned and picked up the first set of plans, and then looked at another. “So what did he say the issue was?” she asked

and put the plans back down so she could look at the men, and listen to them or wait for what they thought before she gave her two cents.

“South wall,” Mohan said from a corner and grinned when she looked over. “Morris claims there’s an issue with the south wall. His words, not ours. We have to look and let him know our thoughts about the potential problem without him biasing us. I passed it off to Ark’s team since they do more of the construction than I do. A wall is a wall in my mind.”

“Well not necessarily,” Goldie said and ran her fingers over the blueprints. “For example: this place is being built where there were swamplands previously. If the area wasn’t sealed, contained, and covered properly with equal distribution of the new soil and rocks, then the south wall might begin to sag. It will have nothing to do with your building or materials, but more with the land it’s being built on.”

“That was all done,” Torben told her as he settled on a stool and watched her. “There are fourteen, one-hundred foot deep pilings with six feet of reinforced concrete as the base for the entire structure. Even if the land shifts or erodes, the house isn’t going anywhere without a nuclear device moving it.”

“Then I would look at your materials provider. The only thing I can think of is perhaps the material used to build the wall isn’t up to par to what you typically would use. You guys don’t seem the type to cut corners though.”

“We aren’t and Morris would have alerted us before now if there was an issue with materials,” Arkadios said, shaking his head. Pulling the plans over, he stared down at them before he walked to the middle of the room and closed his eyes.

“He’s visualizing,” Torben, explained when she glanced his way. “Give him a moment. He’ll see it. He always does. And if he doesn’t we’ll figure it out on site.”

She watched Arkadios as he ‘visualized’ and asked, “Is he the one who typically handles all of the building aspects or something? The one who finds all the issues in building and all that pertains to it?”

“Not really,” Torben said. “Mahon is mainly the money, keeps us on budget and on time. Ark finds the spot, knows where to drive the pilings, and put the foundation by pure instinct. I’m design. I draw them up and then the crew builds them. But we all have instincts during the construction about changing something, moving a wall an inch, or two. The little things

that when you start seeing the space forming, your, feel your, need to alter. He's just visualizing the space and where the foundation was put. From there he'll see the outer walls in relation to the area of land and the visual aspects in trying to find what's wrong."

"Fucking window is in the wrong spot," Arkadios turned. "We moved the wall for the living room so they could have a bigger window and space, but the window needs a lintel. Or with the bay in the den above, the damn thing is going to collapse."

"And the visualizing has worked yet again," Mahon said with a chuckle.

"Now that is freaking scary impressive," Goldie said with wide eyes. "Color me super freaking impressed. That was amazing. How did you do that?" she asked as she moved closer to Ark, reaching out and slipping her hand into his without a conscious thought sliding through her brain.

Shrugging, he spun her around in a circle before hauling her in close. "Don't know, just do," he said. "I see how it was planned and then what has been altered by keeping the original as an overlay. From there my brain works through it all until something clicks or doesn't. It doesn't always work but occasionally it does."

"Well it's freaking impressive. Remind me to ask you to do that another time when I know what's wrong before you do, so I can watch you work the problem out in your mind," she said with a grin. It hit her then that she had her arms wrapped around his neck, holding him close like a lover. "Uhm... I'm sorry," she had been the one to wrap around him. Shit, she needed to pull herself together, quickly.

"For what?" Ark asked, looking genuinely puzzled as he stared down at her. Tipping his head, he moved his gaze over her face before returning to lock with hers eyes again. "What's going on in that head of yours, Goldie? You seem to be thinking awfully hard and appear mighty nervous all of a sudden."

"I'm not so sure this is how you typically hold your employees, is it?" Not that she was moving. "And I can't find it in myself to pull away. How strange is that?" she asked quietly and looked up into his eyes once more.

Ark glanced over Goldie's head making contact with his friends. He knew then they too felt the pull to this small woman. No words were necessary as they all gave a quick nod. She was to their destiny—their mate. Fate had brought her to their doorstep, now it was up to them to keep her. Arkadios knew being the oldest of the three, if only by a few days, he

would be the one to mark her first. Now, all they had to do was inform her they were bears. *Yeah, like that was going to be as easy as finding a pot full of honey.* He looked back down at Goldie as she spoke again.

“Am I the only one who wants to hold on like this?” If so then she was seriously damned.

“Are you hearing me protesting?” he asked, his voice an octave lower, more a rumble. “And no, I can honestly say I’ve never once held an employee like this. I doubt most of the construction guys would appreciate it.”

Goldie chuckled nervously, “Yeah, I think they might be angry with it but one of the assistants might have actually stuck around if you held them like this.” Her hands moved over his shoulders and pulled him closer. “This is very, very nice. I think this is something I could become accustomed to,” she whispered softly. She really had lost her mind. She never was this bold around men. Goldie was beginning to believe it was only these men.

“Not a one of them had your eyes, your lips, or your sense of humor. Deranged as it is,” Ark murmured low. “Nor did they have your body,” he smiled slowly at her. “But I should likely stop saying things like that since you’re... Oh wait,” he chuckled, “you haven’t signed anything yet, you’re not officially an employee.”

Goldie laughed, “Huh... imagine that. You are right. I’m totally not an employee yet. Still have all kinds of paperwork to do and all that.” She felt her body begin to get wet in anticipation. “So I really think we should enjoy the moment of being adults and you should maybe kiss me?” Yeah, she was so going to hell but she couldn’t help herself. She wanted this man to kiss her, hell all three of them. So yes, she had officially turn into a slut and for some reason she could live with it. She was done trying to figure out why she was comfortably relaxed around this men, she was just going to go for it.

Goldie continued to stare up at Ark, memorized by his eyes, his lips, and the way she felt in his arms. She watched, as he seemed to have a small battle raging within. It lasted all of two seconds when his eyes cleared and the only thing showing was desire.

Growling low in his chest, he pulled her tighter to him and did as she’d asked. Kissing her hard, he thrust his tongue in deep when she allowed him access. His hands moved, one to her head to hold her and the other to her ass to lift and grind her against his erection.

Goldie wrapped her legs around his hips, pulling him close and shifting against his rising cock as she kissed him. Arms wrapped tightly around his neck, she kissed him back with the same desperation and need that he filled her with.

Squeezing her ass, Arkadios rubbed his cock into her as he tore his mouth from hers. Moving it down her throat, he nipped and nibbled a path. In his mind he knew he had to stop this before it got out of control but his bear was fighting him. It took everything in him to place Goldie's feet back on the floor and step back from her.

Goldie was dazed, her eyes glazed over, Ark could see the want in her eyes. He felt the need in him to take and knew his friends had to feel the same. Everyone stood silently and watched as Goldie shook her head, looking up at Ark with the look of confusion on her as to why he would stop.

"Sweetheart pulling away from you is last thing I wanted to do. However," he turned his to look at his friends then back at Goldie, "I think it's time for a little discussion. Let's all move to living room.

Chapter Four

Grabbing up beers, Torben passed them out as they all reclined in the living room. Settling across from Goldie, he scrubbed a hand through his hair before taking a long pull on the bottle. "I'm just going to say it outright, you may not want to be drinking when I do," he warned her. "We shifters, Goldie." All three men's eyes focused on her as Torben continued, "We're known as Weres. Bear shifters to be precise. All three of us are Grizzly bears. We've known one another since we were small; we've remained friends through everything. Including the loss of many from our community, where Grizzly shifters once lived, it was a nice, big area, spread out and yet we were there for one another if needed. They were our friends and neighbors, even some family."

"Hunters, damn hunters," Arkadios muttered.

Mahon nodded slowly; swallowing hard, enough she could see the bob of his Adam's apple. "We got lucky though, to a degree. We were at Torben's goofy off when mine and Ark's parents decided they wanted a night out. So all the kids were coming to Torben's place for a sleepover. We hadn't wanted our siblings there but Torben's mom told the other parents she would watch them, leaving her stuck with the lot of us. We didn't even know what was happening until the first explosion, we think it was a propane tank going up," Mahon stopped to swallow and Torben picked up where he left off.

"Hunters are humans who have knowledge of Weres," Torben said. Obviously picking up on her confusion, likely it was written all over her face. "With us living as we were as a community so close knit, the hunters were able to find us easily. You have to understand, Goldie that Grizzlies normally don't live close to one another after coming into adulthood. We were unique, but it cost us because we thought we held security in numbers. After they found us and it was all said and done, we never made that mistake again, we all separated afterwards and spread out, which makes it more difficult for them to track us and find us so easily now. My mom ran in and got us all on our feet and in our coats, so fast."

"She's always been more drill sergeant than not," Ark said, a small and affectionate smile on his lips.

“We were rushed out to the vehicles,” Mahon picked up the story again. “Between hers and the truck belonging to Torben’s dad we were all crammed in. I don’t even recall where they took us but we got out of there fast, really fast.”

“I don’t think they cared where we were going, as long as we were leaving. I remember we stopped at one of the other houses. Martina’s I think,” Torben said.

Looking to her, he explained it was one of his mother's friends; a woman who did a lot of babysitting after her mate and husband had passed on. They went on to tell her about the other vehicles, filled with the living, all getting off the plot of land in the dead of night with whatever they wore or had managed to grab. All in all, too many had died but many were saved because of the distance between homes and the hunter’s error in blowing up a propane tank.

She set the beer down and looked at the three men she had been so intimate with only bare minutes ago. She felt dizzy, she felt as if she was going to pass out. “I’m sorry, what?” She had to have heard him wrong. She knew she had to have heard him incorrectly because she didn’t understand what he was saying. “There is no such thing as shifters, Weres, or whatever. If you guys won't mind, could you show me what medication you are currently on? Did you take it today?" *No fucking way, this guys have to be insane or on drugs because this couldn't be true.* However, she knew though, somewhere deep in her soul, this was her favorite childhood fairy tale. Adult version that is.

As the men said nothing but continued to stare at her, her mind began to process what they had said and everything they did since she was found in their home began to piece together all she had heard and seen from the men.

“The growl, when you talked,” she swallowed, hard, “how it rumbles from your chest. The sniffing of the air in the kitchen. Come to think of it, the way you carry yourself when you walk. All of it.” It was all true and she somehow knew it. “So what happens now?” she whispered finally, her voice thick with emotion. “Are you going to kill me now that I know?”

“No, it is solely up to you,” Arkadios told her quietly. He was rolling the bottle he held between his palms, as if he was nervous. “You’re our mate, we recognize it. We knew when we caught your scent. However, we won't claim you claim you or mark you as ours unless you accept us. The choice

has to be yours to choose us or not. Either way,” he shrugged and took a deep drink.

“Oh my God.” She rose and began to pace. Her mind was freaking out. She was freaking out. She didn’t know what to think or do. It was so much easier when they were just a memory of a book. But real life bears, holy hell. Her mind was telling her to run out the door while down deep in her gut, laid the knowledge that it was all true. It was so very hard for her to think, to do anything at all, it was not a good feeling. Choosing to test the waters, to see how they would react, still just a little unsure if she could do it but she had come this far and sometimes you just had to say ‘fuck it’. “I really think you should hug me,” she blurted. “Because I’m totally freaking out right now.”

Torben caught her hand and drew her onto his knee. Wrapping his arms around her, he pressed his cheek to hers. “Slow your breathing, sweet,” he said, rocking her slowly back and forth. “You don’t have to make any decisions now—nor tomorrow. We’re here to answer any questions you might have and always will be. Think it through and make the choice that you want to make, not the one you think we want you to make. We just want you happy, Goldie, with us or not, but it must be your choice.”

She nodded and held onto him. Wrapping her arms tightly around his neck, she held onto him, forcing herself to calm her breathing, her heart slowing nearly to beat with his. “All I know is I have feelings for you that I’ve never had before. For all three of you. I’ve never once just jumped into bed with anyone, ever, so yeah.” She sighed and shook her head. “I don’t know. I really don’t,” she whispered honestly to him.

For several minutes, she didn’t speak and then she raised her face, taking in all the men and yelled, “That is it! That is why you seemed so familiar to me.” She pressed her face into the crook of Torben’s neck and laughed, “I go by Goldie. You are three bears. I broke into your house in the middle of nowhere.” She snickered, “Why had this not registered as it was happening.”

“Trust us,” Mahon commented in a dry tone, “The fact hasn’t eluded our notice. Rather poetic when you consider it.”

“Down, Mahon,” Torben murmured, stroking her hair. “You could quit laughing any time now, Goldie. It really isn’t all that amusing,” he said, pressing a kiss to her temple and then her cheek.

“Yeah, well you missed me tasting the food you left, and your beds,” she muttered. Pulling back, she looked at the men and asked bluntly, “You aren’t going to hurt me are you? When Torben began to growl, for a moment I felt a little fear. Granted, it was quickly overridden because a part of me knew you wouldn’t but I want to hear it from you please.”

“We’d rather rip out our own hearts than ever hurt you, Goldie,” Arkadios told her. “We couldn’t hurt you anymore than we could hurt ourselves. You are everything to us, if you so choose to be. The growling,” he gaze flicked past her and then back “is something we can’t help when our emotions kick up.”

“Well that would totally explain why you guys weren’t ready to call the cops on me when you found me,” she murmured softly. “It would also likely explain why I feel so close to you, even though we have just met. Why I feel as if I have known you all my life. It is because I have. The fairy tale was my favorite as a little girl. But have to admit the adult version is looking a lot better than the animated picture book.”

“Huh, see what we missed by not liking storybooks guys. However, we recognize one another on a level that is beyond all that. Our souls know each other. We see each other for who we really are and know that in some cases words are not required.”

“Yeah, that’s exactly it,” she said with a sigh. “Well, working together we will learn a great deal about each other, huh? And I do still get to work for you, right? Because I think it might be a conflict of interest for me to work for your competition and date you guys, right?”

“Major conflict of interest,” Mahon said. “And yes, the job is still yours if you want it. We would like to have you there, just for who you are, not because you’re ours. We happen to like you, Goldie, a lot. This will also give you more time to know us.”

“I think I would like that as well. I want to be able to get to know all three of you better. I happen to really like you guys. Even though I’m pretty positive, I want to see if that feeling will grow.” She knew she already had pretty intense feelings for them.

“They’ll grow,” Ark said, leaning back in his chair. “Whether you still like us as a result,” he shrugged and shot her a slightly cocky grin. “Just remember, we do bite.”

“Ark,” Mahon groaned, “none of that yet. Let the poor woman get used to us one weirdness at a time without that shit. Once she makes it a month,

then you can unload the full freak on her.”

“Yes, please, let me get used to you first. I’m not easy to scare away and you should know that now, so stop trying to act as if I’m going to go running. I haven’t ran yet, so I seriously doubt I will.”

Torben chuckled softly and pressed a kiss to her cheek. “You good now?” he asked with a grin. “Because if you are, we should finish up our drinks and get some sleep. We have to get moving in the morning so you can run by your place and get whatever you need for the night and then dressed for the day.”

“I think that sounds like a good idea. Yeah sleep sounds good because I really, really need to have clean clothes for the day tomorrow,” she told him.

“Okay, come on. We will show you to the guest room. We won’t pressure you for more Goldie until you are ready,” Torben said.

Trying to lighten the mood, Goldie smiles as she teased, “So do you sleep in a puppy pile or what?”

Shaking his head, Arkadios stood and finished his beer off. “If you are going to make fun of us, it’s cubs. Now come on, sugar, let’s go and get you settled in while they shut the house down.” Handing his bottle off to Mahon, he held out a hand to Goldie.

Goldie gladly took his hand as he pulled to the stairs. Once upstairs they showed her to the guest room. The whole way up the stairs the only thing she thought about was please not the pink room.

As she entered the room she turned as Torben and Mahon came up the hall only to stop beside Ark.

“Good night, guys.” She yawned and preceded to shut the door.

“Good night, Goldie,” all three said in unison just as the door clicked closed.

Chapter Five

Goldie was in her room getting ready for the upcoming party. She had spent the day with the men and was amazed at how attentive they had been to her all day. It didn't matter how many meeting or sites they visited showing her their company. They wanted her to be familiar with everything, making her feel like she belonged. Not once during the day did they pressure her or make any comment about her being theirs. The men really were leaving the decision up to her.

She had spent half the night looking at the whole picture of actually being a mate to three men, bears or not. *Three—unbelievable*. Goldie thought back to her childhood and how many times she had read her favorite book. To think she could live it everyday as a real life version was surreal.

A knock on the door sounded bring her focus back to present, “Goldie, you ready to go?” Torben’s voice drifted through the wood. She was getting dressed for the event that night, should have been ready already if not for a small issue. “We need to get moving in the next ten if we’re going to arrive in the fashionably late portion and not the late-late portion of the night.”

“It’s not my fault,” she peeked out the door with a grin on her face, “you men were the ones who kept working and then we still had to go by my apartment so I could grab what I needed.” She opened the door all the way, walking out of the bathroom and smoothing her hands down over the skirt. “There, how do I look?” she asked with her arms wide to give him the full view of the skirt and shirt she was wearing.

“You’d better not be blaming us, woman,” he muttered, turning to take her in. He gave a low whistle, “Son of a bitch, woman, you are a fucking vision and a half. A goddess amongst mere mortals, we are truly not worthy,” he told her shaking his head.

“And you’re not bad looking either,” she teased with a grin. She winked at him and moved closer, “Good. Glad you think so.” Goldie turned to reenter the room.

“Hey, I thought you were ready. We fucking have to go or we’re never going to get there tonight. Which will not do, we need to go and schmooze.

Plus every year at this event, Arkadios loves getting his paws on the appetizers and trying to figure out what they are."

"I just need my bag." Goldie leaned over and grabbed her evening bag off the bed then standing she turned to face Torben again. "All right then, let's get out of here so we can go and play nice and do what we need to do in order to secure the contract you guys want."

"And lay the groundwork for many more to come," he said softly. "Your former bosses will be there, you going to be okay with that?" he asked, cupping her cheek with a hand.

Thankfully she'd accepted their job offer and turned in her notice shortly after. But it would be easy for her with all those at the old company; Barrett in particular, had put her through of late. "Just a little nerves. I know just what kind of assholes they can be. Add to that the fact they really don't care what they say in public, as long as they drag someone through the mud with them. And there you have it—nerves. But I will be fine with them being there. If they say anything to me then I will ensure they are put in their places. I know a few things I really don't think some of their clients would take to kindly to if they found out. Plus I don't want them taking out me resigning with them to take a job with your firm out on you guys. You have been nothing but gracious and nice to me."

"Don't go too far, Goldie," Torben warned, touching her cheek. "We have a solid reputation and no matter what they say, there are hundreds out there willing to back us up without us needing to say a word. But if you go all kamikaze on their asses, I don't see it ending well for any of us."

"I won't," she said with a smile. "But I also won't let them be mean, or give you grief about hiring me or having me around. I mean it, Torben. I adore you guys and no one messes with my bears."

"We know that," he smiled at her and shook his head. "Just don't threaten him with all those people there. Try to be subtle and if that fails, get Ark to do it. No one thinks anything when he threatens anyone in public anymore."

Smiling sweetly Goldie shook her head, "Don't worry, I won't do anything I haven't done before." Which meant she would bring the asshats to their knees if they even dared to think of touching her or verbally attacking those she cared for.

"Kind of what I'm scared of," Torben admitted, shaking his head. Taking her hand, he led her out of his office muttering the entire way. Down

on street level, he guided her out to the stretch limo waiting with Ark and Mahon lounging within. Opening the door, he ushered her in, followed, and then let the driver know to get moving.

Goldie began to grin as she looked at the men, "Goodness gracious you guys certainly clean up nicely," she murmured happily. "Are you sure you want to waste the evening on a business dinner."

"We have to go to this, but we only have to stay about two hours, tops," Mahon told her as he passed Torben's phone to him. "I've put in the two you need to locate and chat with or be near," he explained. "We should meet about an hour after our arrival and figure out who else to hit up. Ark, you stay with me for the first portion. Goldie with Torben, you'll need to know the people he'll be talking with so you understand what their needs are as well. Then we'll switch off partners after a quick confab and shots at the bar."

"Sounds like a plan to me. That way we can move and mingle through the crowd as we need to and after that, we will ensure we are able to discuss what we have learned during that time as well. I think that will be a very good idea, don't you?" she asked softly.

"Works for me," Ark said with a nod. "First stop is the bar though. The God help me if I don't get at least one drink in before I start getting mauled," he muttered.

Torben snickered and leaned over. "Apparently women over a certain age have a thing for Ark and like to hunt him. Literally. We have a neighbor, Mrs. Riley, who's like seventy-five and she creates issues or things for us to fix just to get Arkadios over there."

"The fucking woman stalks me through her house and gooses my ass anytime I turn my back. No one with arthritis as bad as hers appears to be should be able to move that damn silently," Ark bitched loudly.

Goldie laughed at his statement and shook her head, "Are you sure I shouldn't mingle with Ark then? You know, maybe to protect his delicious backside." Goldie's hand quickly came up to cover her mouth while she looked at the men. Not believing she had voiced that out loud.

The only response she received from the men were the huge smiles she watched spread across their faces. They smiled at her for just a moment then Mahon answered.

"Nope, you're with Torben for this round," Mahon said shaking his head. "Don't mess with the plan woman. He'll introduce you to everyone,

let them know who you are and then we will go from there. Now, go mingle and we'll all meet in one hour at the bar for drinks and to discuss."

She held up her hands and laughed, "All right. One hour," she snickered and linked her arm with Torben. Looking up at him happily, she grinned, "So what are you introducing me as? Your new employee or your own BE overnight guest?"

"BE guest? Please, if you are the type of guest we get with leaving the doors unlocked, then breaking and entering guest we shall gladly call you," he chuckled leading her away from the others. Torben dropped his voice, "Goldie, I want you to know that no matter what happens, whether you accept us or not—you are and always will be so much more to us. But we do need to be careful tonight, some of these people are very, very old school," he warned under his breath. "For now you are our new executive assistant and in time, if you do choose us, we'll let it out of the bag that you were meant to be ours as we were meant to be yours. But little steps for now."

Goldie thought for a moment then she nodded, "This is true. I think it's a very good idea that you introduce me first as your executive assistant, then maybe more."

"We only hope, much, much more," he agreed with a grin. Tucking her hand in the crook of his arm he let out a breath. "Prepare to endure entirely new levels of boredom," he murmured, leading her toward the first group.

"I'm as ready as I will ever be," Goldie shot back to him, but moved right along with him as they spoke. Reaching out to the tray passing by, she grabbed a flute of champagne for her and one for him as well. "So." She took a sip. "What are you thinking, my dear? Who do we hit up first?"

"The Millers first," he said, leading her toward the couple holding court as it were. "They have a not-for-profit group that builds homes for battered women. They usually do about forty or so at a time, and women that qualify get a home, a job, and a new start. We've built a couple of homes for the project, our good deed of the year. We like to do it and really it costs us nothing but time."

"That's actually an amazing and worthy cause. I'm proud of you guys." She hadn't ever worked for someone before who thought of others before their bottom line. It was refreshing and very nice indeed.

"We're able to do it and given Mahon's childhood, we feel it's our duty to do what little we can." Stopping at the group, he smiled at the Millers,

“Sorry to interrupt. Frank, Georgina, this is Goldie—our newest executive assistant. Goldie—Mr. Frank Miller and Mrs. Georgina Miller, the founders of the Miller Foundation for Women.”

Goldie shook their hands and smiled, “It’s very nice to meet you both.” She first shook his hand and then hers, “Torben told me of the work you do. It’s a marvelous cause. I’m impressed with what you have been able to do and would be very interested to perhaps discuss with you some of your upcoming plans?”

“I like her, Torben, my boy,” Frank said with a slow nod. “We have a meeting coming up, don’t we?” he looked to him.

“Yes, sir, we do. Next Tuesday I believe,” Torben said with a chuckle.

“Good, make sure you block off a full two hours,” Georgina said with a smile. “We have a new build that we think you and the lads would be perfect for. Speaking of, where is Arkadios?” she asked with a sly look in her eyes.

Torben sipped the champagne, “I believe he’s over near the bar.”

“Excellent, I will have to go and say hello to him,” she smiled oh so sweetly.

After the Millers left, Goldie turned to Torben and grinned, “Does Ark know you are the one that sends all the women his way for their chance to feel him up? You are truly a very bad man, but you know what?” She looked over the rim of her champagne glass and said, “I like it.”

Chuckling under his breath, he shrugged, “I’m not about to tell him I’m roughly half the reason he gets his ass pinched. The other half is all Mahon,” he told her as they moved to the next group. “Uh-oh,” he said, stopping their progress, “Looks like your former bosses are here.”

Goldie’s smile fell from her face and a deep sigh went through her small body. “Wonderful,” she muttered. “Where’s the champagne, wine, anything?” she asked and tapped her empty glass with a short but well-manicured nail.

He passed over his still mostly full glass and took her empty one. “Just remember, we’re here for business and not to beat the shit out of them. No matter what, we do not sink to their level. And we don’t go to them, they can come to us if they so have the need.”

“Yeah, well just don’t be surprised if I don’t shove my thousand dollar shoe up his fucking ass,” she muttered and took a sip of her drink to tell him, “That is Barrett, the douche who brought along his buddies to play

‘fuck me’ the night I took off from them in the woods. I don’t know if I can be kind.”

Torben’s entire body went still and a low growl emanated from his chest. “They’re the ones who planned to rape you?” he asked. Had his voice been any colder she’d likely have gotten frostbite from his words.

“Which is why I said don’t be surprised if my fucking shoe doesn’t wind up somewhere it shouldn’t fit.” She laid a hand on his arm and gave it a squeeze. “Calm, Torben,” she whispered. “Please, calm for me.” She moved so she stood before him and reached up to cup his face, “Hey, look at me, not him.”

His gaze dropped to her but the feral look in them wasn’t what she’d ever seen before. “Tell me the truth, Goldie, did they touch you in any way that justifies me ripping their entrails out and dancing on them?”

Oh shit, he had to be all nice and direct didn’t he? “No skin to skin contact.” Which was the truth. Well, except for her hand grazing across someone’s face as she punched him, but she didn’t think that should count. “Just think of it like this, if not for him, I never would have met the three of you.”

“I don’t plan on thanking them for fucking anything about that. You could have been hurt, you’re bloody lucky you weren’t,” he told her. His stance relaxed though and his eyes slowly returned to normal, “We’d have eventually found you, Goldie. While I’m grateful it was sooner rather than later, I don’t ever plan to be gracious to those assholes. In fact,” he stopped and his lips curled ever so slightly and not into a nice smile, it was edged with feral energy and something even more deadly.

“Shit,” Goldie muttered and took her drink and gulped it back. Turning because she knew just who was at her back, she pasted a smile. “Barrett and his goon squad. I guess they really can dress an asshole up in a monkey suit. Amazing. Simply amazing.”

“Jacilda,” Barrett sneered at her. “I see you’ve managed to wiggle your way into a new job. But given how you throw yourself around but never put out, I’m not surprised. I’m sure they will figure it out soon enough and you’ll slither onto the next sucker.”

"Listen asshole, she works for us. We know you had plan for her, so I advise you to step softly around her," Torben spoke in an almost whisper so the other around wouldn't hear. He could feel his bear pushing to the surface.

Before Barrett could come back at Torben, Goldie smiled sweetly, “Oh, that’s clever coming from you. Say, does your wife know you have herpes, and got it from Tina in accounting? No? Let’s go tell her shall we? No, you don’t want to tell her? Well poo. Damn and here I had thought getting that call from your doctor and then Tina’s doctor would be something I would be sure your wife should know about. But know this,” she said angrily, “say one more thing against me, or fuck against anyone I know, and I will ensure that every single fucking thing you did in that company comes to light. Not even your damn daddy who allows you to run it, will be able to save you then.”

Torben put a hand on her back, his fingers a warm weight at her spine. Barrett sputtered and then turned quickly to walk away. “Sorry, Goldie. I couldn’t let him talk to you like that. Are you alright?” he asked softly, passing her another glass of champagne he had snagged from a passing waiter.

“Perfectly.” Goldie smiled up at him and sighed. “Damn that felt good,” she admitted. “Yes I know it was crass and low, but I wasn’t about to sit by and let him spew his lies on me then cause your company any trouble, and trust me, he would have.”

“He may still, but that’s alright. I have plans for him and his buds for trying to hurt what is mine,” he murmured. Leading her away from the groups, he took her to a spot near a wall that was partially shielded from the room by a large sculpture, giving her time to gather her composure.

“Oh, I don’t think he will because there is nothing he can do to hurt me. Career wise, I’m one of the most sought after PAs there are. I know my stuff inside and out. If he comes at me, I will simply have to ensure his nasty collection of DVDs become known. He is just a hot winded perverted fucker.”

“Oh darling, that is just so crass,” he shook his head at her. “There are much more subtle ways to put them in their places. There are much more interesting ways to keep them where we want them and ensure they pay for everything for the rest of their miserable days.”

“Oh?” she asked with a new glass of bubbly in her hands. “And please tell me, darling, how you intend to make that happen? I would very much like to know just how you intend on ensuring the douchenozzle leaves us all alone. He isn’t even worth the bag.”

“Oh darling, I could tell you but you would then hold knowledge that could potentially be used against us,” he grinned. “Don’t worry, you will learn that we have our ways. For now, we need to network and see whom else we can set up meetings with. Tomorrow will be soon enough to discuss ruining Barrett and his band of deviants.”

“We don’t have to tell Ark, right?” She wasn’t worried for Arkadios so much as she was her conscience when Ark killed all of them and left their bones for the birds to pick clean. Out of the three men she had already learned he was the one everyone should worry about crossing.

“You already know the answer to that question,” he said softly. Giving her hand a squeeze, he led her back out into the room and snagged her a new glass of champagne, switching it out for her nearly empty one. “But we won’t talk to him until tonight, after the party, so mums the word while we’re here.”

“Totally, because I don’t think I have nearly enough money to post bail for murder,” she grumbled. “All right, smiles back in place and time for us to mingle again. How much longer?” She felt like a petulant child but the fun of the night was now all gone because of Barrett and his bastards.

“We’ll only stay for little while longer, promise,” Torben said quietly. Pressing his hand to her back, he led her along. “Then we’ll depart this mess and go somewhere the four of us can talk more.”

“I think that sounds like a good idea. I want to learn and know everything about you.” Goldie smile at him as if she had a secret but was willing to share.

“What I wouldn’t give to know what the look is about,” he said in a low murmur.

Goldie grin grew larger.

An hour later, Goldie was finally about to step outside for some fresh air. Turning her face up to the moon, she sighed and then smiled when she felt Ark’s arms closing around her middle and pulling her close. She didn’t know how she knew it was him but she did. “Arkadios,” she whispered and lay her hand on his, her fingers gently caressing him as she did so.

Goldie was feeling a pull and she had needed some time alone to figure out her feelings, because the more time she spent with them the more she was feeling as if they wanted something more, something she was now more than willing to give to them. Forever was sounding more and more

like something she could do as she leaned back into to Ark chest. Soon they would have to return to the party but she would enjoy just a few more minutes of quiet.

They made it through the party although the men noticed her thoughtful silence they didn't comment. All of them had spoken off to the side when they saw she had withdrawn. They figured Goldie would tell them when she was ready, but the look on her face throughout the night had given them hope when at times she smiled as if she was content when in their arms.

Goldie and her bears enjoyed the rest of the party, leaving with the feeling they had accomplished what they set out to do. Once in the limo, they all leaned back in their seats, she noticed the men had their eyes closed, giving her the opportunity to really look at them. When she did, the last of her inhibitions left and she knew what she wanted. Sitting up straight she cleared her throat, "Guys," she said softly until three sets of eyes were focused on her, then she said the three words she hoped they would understand the meaning to, just as the limo pulled up in front of their house, "I am yours."

Goldie watched as the men's eyes grew wide then suddenly changed in color and all at once in movement so fast the doors were open and she was being pulled from the her seat. Arkadios had her in his arms as Torben and Mahon ran ahead, opening doors. "I can walk, you know?"

The only reply she got was, "Yep, maybe later," as Ark ran up the stairs to the bedrooms. She knew then these men were hers—her bears.

Chapter Six

Goldie laughed as she was flung onto the bed. Her men stood on all three sides of the bed. Ark was at the bottom looking at her with desire in his eyes. She smiled and watched as they all began to take off their clothes. It was like her own little striptease then she frowned.

“Wait do I need dollars?” She smiled.

The men groaned and put their hands to their faces. “Baby, let us seduce you please?”

Goldie laughed. “Fine take all my fun away.”

Her men crawled on the bed and undressed her quickly. She giggled at their desperation with the clasp of her bra, it ended up ripped to pieces by all of them. She felt their passion and leaned back on her elbows.

The laughing stop when Ark took one of her nipples into his mouth. Throwing her head back, she held his head to her breast and whimpered. She wanted him; hell, she wanted all three of them, she wanted them to claim her. “Please,” she whispered, her eyes wide and looking at Torben and Mahon, inviting them without words to join, if they wanted.

Moving in close, Torben caught her chin and kissed her, his hands sliding over her body slowly. One of his hands found her other breast and played with it, his fingers plucking and rolling the tight nipple.

Moments later another hand turned her head and Mahon was kissing her, his hands moving on her flesh. A finger soon was stroking her anus, rubbing as all their hands moved over her flesh, their mouths on her, sucking, licking, and kissing.

She bit his lip lightly and smiled, pulling back as she did so. “Yes, more. Please don’t stop. Even if I’m dreaming don’t let me ever wake,” she begged and rubbed her pussy harder against Ark’s thick and heavy cock.

They positioned her to how they wanted her, so the three could pleasure her at the same time, then Arkadios was kissing her, Mahon was stroking her ass and licking her breasts. And Torben was between her legs, his mouth on her pussy.

Goldie’s hands fisted in Ark’s hair, she held him close even as she arched up into Torben’s mouth. “God, yes. There,” she begged all three men whose hands seemed to be everywhere.

“Sweet as honey,” Torben growled out, flicking his tongue over her slick pussy. Pressing two fingers deeply inside of her, he pumped them in and out, as he nibbled over her thigh. “Tight, so fucking tight,” he groaned when she contracted her inner muscles.

“Because there hasn’t been a great deal before you. That feels so good,” she reached out and cupped her hand around Ark’s cock and smiled. “I want to taste you, bring your cock closer.”

Smiling, Goldie took his cock into her mouth, trying to take him as deeply as she could before sucking, hollowing her cheeks out to give him as much pleasure as she was receiving. Closing her eyes, she began to move her hand up and down the long part of his cock that still wasn’t in her mouth, while undulating against Torben at the same time.

“Beautiful,” Mahon groaned as he flicked his tongue to her nipple. Sucking one into his mouth while he moved his finger to push against her back hole, then running the finger back and forth to gather her juices, which were dripping from her pussy. Returning his finger to circle and press against the hole, gaining entrance as he pushed past the ring of muscle after stroking in and out a few times, he then pressed his finger deep into her ass before slowly adding a second. Working them in slowly, he stretched her a little at a time, letting her motions push onto and pull off his intruding digits.

She had never felt such intense and surreal pleasure in her life. Never before had she felt so amazed by anyone before. “Oh God,” she panted against Ark’s cock. “Please, don’t stop,” she begged and rocked back and forth on the fingers in her body, the pleasure of their hands touching her and demanding more.

Mahon’s fingers spread in her ass. Torben’s fingers pumping in and out of her pussy harder and faster. The mouth on her clit was sucking hard while the one on her nipple teasing and tormenting. Then there was Arkadios, his cock in her mouth as he stared down at her in need, hunger, and something more.

Taking Arkadios’s cock deeper into her mouth, she began to moan. She was determined to give him as much pleasure as the others were giving her now. She shuddered, lifting her body with the aide of her foot on Torben’s shoulder. She was close, so very fucking close.

Sliding a hand into her hair, Ark tipped her head back a bit and growled at her. “Come now,” he ordered a moment before he thrust in a bit more and

shuddered. His head went back and he snarled as he spilled his seed on her tongue and down her throat.

Goldie looked at the large box of condoms and smiled. "I don't think we will use that many tonight, but I'm glad you think we might be able to," she teased and held her hand out to him. "Come here," she murmured happily. "I need you."

Chuckling, he tore into the package in hand and rolled it onto his cock. "Darling, I'm pretty sure we can make it through that box. We won't be alone for long after all and we have pretty damn good stamina too. But first we are claiming you." Climbing onto the bed, he crawled toward her, slow like he was stalking her.

"Yay," she said with a smile and parted her legs, her fingers rubbing up and down the insides of her thighs, her eyes never leaving his as she watched him stalking her. Kneeling between her legs, he reached for her and pulled her up into his lap. Spreading her legs, he lifted her and pressed his cock against her pussy, "Sweetheart, remember we are going to all bit you. Don't get freaked."

"Can't wait." Her hands braced on his shoulder, she bit her lower lip and rubbed against him. She closed her eyes and pulled in closer to him, her breasts rubbing against his chest as she shivered. "I want as much as you guys want to give me. I want to try everything, do everything with you."

"It's not going to end for us, Goldie, we have all the time in the world," he said with a slow smile. Kissing her, he began to move, his hold loosening on her. Rocking his hips slowly, he began to stroke her anus, sliding another finger in to stretch her more.

Goldie rocked and moved on Torben, and bobbed her head on Mahon's cock. When they finally got into place.

Arkadios spread his fingers in her ass and slowly added a third, pushing in deeper. Nibbling on her shoulder, he nipped at her throat. Sliding his tongue against her skin, he growled low, his other hand moving to cup one of her breasts, his fingers finding her tight nipple.

"God yes," she moaned and pulled off Mahon. She never thought she would be into biting, but damn that little scrape of Ark's teeth to her neck had sent her pussy quivering in need.

"Suck his cock," Arkadios told her, his mouth a breath from her skin. Only when she put her mouth back on Mahon did he use his teeth on her throat and shoulder again. He was careful though, just a small frisson of

pain, he made his mark finally, the pain was sharp but his tongue soothed it away. She moaned around Mahon's cock, her cheeks hollowing out time and again so she could give more pressure, more suction. Lifting a hand, she braced it on his chest and moved faster and faster, her hand moving to his cock so she could circle him with both hands and squeeze as she sucked.

"That's it, baby," Torben encouraged her as he palmed her other breast and teased her nipple. Slamming his cock up into her pussy, he pulled on her tight nipple. "God, I need to come. Come for us, baby, suck Mahon dry and come for us."

She couldn't deny them anything. Pushing back against both Ark's fingers and Torben's cock, she sucked Mahon harder, faster, and deeper. She soon found herself coming with a scream that was caught with the flesh of a pulsing cock, the seed Mahon shot down her throat making her whole body feel pure and intense pleasure.

Torben came, slamming into her pussy as he held her to him, a growl breaking free of his throat that nearly mirrored the one Mahon gave. He made his mark throwing her over yet again. Arkadios caught her to him, cradling her as Mahon flopped down onto the bed, and Torben bit her and then fell back when they had both ridden another orgasm, his body at a weird angle. "I think you done went and killed them, woman," he chuckled, nipping her jaw.

"I can't feel my legs," Torben groaned.

Arkadios snorted and lifted Goldie off him and into his lap, his cock rubbing between her ass cheeks. "If you hadn't tried to turn into a pretzel you likely could," he said.

Groaning again, Torben shifted to his side and with apparent care, stretched his legs out slowly on a moan.

"Should I feel bad about all this?" she asked and rubbed against Arkadios as she did so. "Or are we going to do this again. Because with you guys, I would consider dual action."

"The choice is yours, little one, but if it's your ass, we will need lube and we will need to go very slowly," he said kissing his mark.

She kissed Mahon first and then moved so she could take Torben's cock into her mouth. "All right," she murmured and adjusted herself against Mahon's body.

"Condom. Crap, forgot," she muttered and looked down at him with a smile. "Glove it up so we can do some lovin'," she teased him happily,

moved to rub her nose to his, and dropped a kiss on his lips.

Growling softly, he caught her face and held her for a deeper kiss. It was fairly intense, or was until a condom packet smacked his ear. "Hey," Mahon snarled over at Arkadios.

"No nookie for you until you are properly packaged, bub," Ark told him as he moved back onto the bed, his cock already sheathed in the rubber. Torben snorted out a chuckle. "No comments from the peanut gallery," Ark said before pressing a kiss to Goldie's spine.

She nodded happily and moved so she could position herself to take Mahon's cock into her body. So very slowly, she dropped her body onto him and moaned, shivering and crying out as she did so. She braced her hands on his shoulder and chest and moved on him in a slow and teasing move.

Gripping her hips, he stilled her movement, "Not so fast, darling," he grinned up at her. "Give Arkadios a chance to slip inside of you and then we can start this dance. You will enjoy it all the more when you have both holes full."

She nodded and licked her lips. Looking back at Arkadios, she bit her lip slightly. She simply wanted to be with these men, being loved on by them and knowing how much they wanted her as well.

Moving closer, he uncapped the lube and looked her way, "It's going to be a little cold." He pressed the container into her anus, a moment later, cold gel slid into her ass. He withdrew and rubbed some around her hole.

She gasped with the cold gel touching her ass but soon found herself moaning instead and pushing against Mahon. "Please. I want you inside of me."

"Just spreading the lube around," he told her before moving behind her. "Stay still, Goldie and relax. Slow breaths and when I push in, you push out. We'll go in little increments until you've taken all of me that you can." Pressing the head of his cock to her ass, he pressed in until the head was caught within.

She felt her inner muscles clenching on him, felt her body giving way to his cock and shuddered. "So very, very good," she shuddered as she spoke, pushing back against Ark.

"That's it, Goldie," he encouraged as he fed more of his cock into her ass. Before each pull, he drew back a little and pressed in. His hands

stroked over her back, her ass, and everything he could reach while he filled her with his hard cock.

Goldie moaned as pure and intense pleasure washed through her entire body as Ark filled her ass with his cock, and Mahon filled her cunt with his. “Hell yes. Just like that,” she demanded.

Growling, Ark slammed in the last bit, his fingers digging into her hips as he shuddered against her back. “Damn it to hell,” he groaned out. “Like a fucking glove around my cock.” He slid nearly all the way free before jerking his hips forward and filling her hard and fast once more.

Goldie couldn’t breathe. She couldn’t talk, instead—she felt. Instead, she moved with him and accepted all that he was, gave as good as she got and enjoyed every single part of the moment with them.

Torben rolled onto his side and propped his head on his hand, “You’re beautiful, Goldie,” he said with a smile. Reaching out a hand, he ran his fingers over her cheek. “How do you liking having both inside of you?”

“It feels amazing,” she said honestly. Turning to look at him, she smiled, moving with Ark and Mahon and then licking her lips. “Come closer, it’s your turn, big guy.”

“Oh you want me to move?” he grinned at her. “Well, I suppose I could be persuaded, maybe. Feel up to persuading me?” he teased. His fingers stroked down her throat and over her chest. He flicked one of her tight nipples before tugging lightly.

She pushed against him and smiled happily. “I think if you come here, you won’t be disappointed.”

“Mmm...I would like to see your lips wrapped around my cock,” he admitted with a lazy one-shoulder shrug. “I think you’ve persuaded me.” Pushing to his knees, he moved in closer to her, gathering her hair in a hand and tied it in a messy knot over the shoulder furthest from him.

Goldie leaned in and in one move had her lips wrapped tight around his cock. Torben was sent to another world, he would swear on it.

She wrapped her hands around his thighs and pulled him close. “Perfect,” he told her, staring down into her eyes. “Even better than all the images I conjured up,” he chuckled before he moaned. “Oh God, do that with your tongue again,” Torben demanded, rolling his hips slightly.

She did as he instructed, she licked her lips and then ran her tongue over the head of his cock, she stroked the underside with her tongue, she ensured that he felt every bit of pleasure she was feeling as well. She wanted, *no*,

she needed him to feel every bit as much pleasure as she was feeling at that moment.

Torben's hand fisted in her hair and he growled deep, his gaze locked with hers. Rocking his hips slowly, he pressed into her mouth and then out where she ran her tongue around the head again. "More," he demanded, his voice deeper, different—not quite human.

Goldie frowned but she didn't stop, mostly because it felt so good, but a shiver of fear ran down her spine at his growl, at the tone he used. Something she would have to address at a later time. Her tongue bathed his cock happily, hungrily. She licked him and closed her eyes, shivering and knowing she was so very, very close to her own orgasm that it just wasn't fair.

Ark's voice was in her ear, his breath stroking her flesh, "Come for us, suck him hard and let's all fly into the abyss together," he whispered. "Scrape your teeth on his cock lightly and squeeze his balls. Make him come so we can all come, baby."

Goldie couldn't deny Arkadios anything. Her teeth scraped over Torben's cock, her hands gently rolling his balls and fingers stroking against him as she did so. She began sucking on him, demanding his release right along with hers.

Pushing his cock into her mouth slowly, his control obviously still there despite the near constant growling he was making, Torben began to pant. Sliding it in once more, he threw his head back and came on what sounded suspiciously like a roar, yet was clearly her name.

Goldie drank down his seed as he spilled inside of her mouth. When she pulled back, she was panting, collapsing against Mahon, and gasping for air. She felt both Ark's and Mahon's orgasms, not by the splash of seed but the tightening of their hands and their roars.

"You are ours." Ark sighed and the men cleaned her up quickly from their little marathon. When they were done all of them settled. Mahon laying at the bottom. The others by her side. She smiled as she fell asleep with the knowledge she was finally their mate.

Chapter Seven

“Good morning, Goldie,” Arkadios’s voice was next to her ear. “The others are still sleeping,” the fur on her legs and one side of her torso proved those words. “I’m going to go and start breakfast. Did you want anything particular this morning?” he asked quietly.

“Bacon,” Goldie said and lifted her face to his. “And a kiss,” she demanded. “When they said that I would be sleeping with bears I never dreamed they really meant it.” She was trying to do her damndest not to freak, but she was literally waking with bears wrapped up close to her body.

“A kiss I can do,” he kissed her slowly, deeply before drawing back. “And I can even do the bacon too,” that was said with a grin. “As for the bears, they did tell you. It was the easiest way to keep you warm, darling. Plus you knew we were bears.”

“Oh, I know that, but it’s just a little hard for the waking mind to see and feel bears when you’ve never so much as slept with a teddy bear before.” She smiled and ran a hand over the fur of the one she thought was Torben, “He’s so much softer than I expected.” The fur was like silk, and smelled just like the man.

“Well, now you fully comprehend, darling,” Ark chuckled getting to his feet. He moved to the pile of clothes and dug through for a pair of pants. “So bacon, anything else you want?” he asked, doing up the slacks.

“Toast, lots of butter and I would kill for some strawberry jam too,” she told him as she laid back on the rug, curling into Torben and sighing in utter contentment. “This is actually very nice,” she murmured and rubbed her cheek along the fur happily.

“As it should be,” he said, pulling a throw off a couch. Moving to her, he draped it over her exposed side, “The fire died down a couple of hours ago. Don’t want you getting a chill,” he explained before leaving her with the two bears still sleeping.

“Thank you,” she said with a smile and snuggled close to her bears again. It amused her they were still sound asleep with she and Ark having had a conversation. She liked it a great deal though. She was more than happy to lay on the floor with them.

An hour later, he was back and kicking one of the fur balls in the ass. “Get up you sluggish beasts. Breakfast is ready, so shift back and get to the kitchen. Come on, Goldie,” he held out a hand, “Time to be up, sweetness.”

Goldie moved easily into Ark’s arms. She loved Torben and Mahon as well but Arkadios, there was just something different about him, more special to her. “Good morning,” she whispered and reached up to stroke her hand down his cheek. “Did you find me some strawberry jam?”

“I did, but there’s not a lot left so you’ll want to get in there and steal it before the others get up,” he said. Mahon was yawning wide and stretching even as the fur seemed to melt off his body. His shape changed, becoming slimmer, and more of the man.

“And yet I know without a shadow of a doubt they would move heaven and earth for me if I wanted them to. They will let me have the jam, even if I tease them with it, we both know that.” She watched Mahon shifting and moving in utter and complete fascination. “Wow, how cool is that?”

Mahon straightened on his feet, “Very cool. But yes, we would eat the jam, darling. We might love you and do anything for you, but when it’s the last of the strawberry jam, we’ll fight tooth and nail to have it ourselves.”

“Well then, you will be fighting me. And since I woke before you did, then I get first dibs. Sucks to be you, sleepy heads,” she teased them and winced when she pulled a shirt on. Pulling the neck of it back, she frowned, “And I totally deserve it because I’m the one who is bruised this morning, not you.”

“Where?” Arkadios demanded as he turned her around and cursed. “Shit,” he whispered, running a light finger down her shoulder. “We should put some ice on that, but I doubt it will do all that much good now.”

“Ice would be very welcome. And to be honest, I didn’t even notice it until I pulled the shirt on and then ouchy.” She pulled back and nodded, “So how about either some frozen peas or ice in a towel, please?”

“Give her the mixed vegetables, those things are nasty,” Torben said as he walked up next to her. “Come on, darling, we’ll get you set with the veggies and you can have breakfast.” All three men urged her into the kitchen. Ark went to the freezer and dug out the bag, smacking it on the counter a couple of times before wrapping it in a tea towel and handing it to Torben.

She laughed and took the wrapped veggies and draped it on her shoulder. The cold felt wonderful on her shoulder and she sighed. “All

right. Feed me, please.” She moved to take a seat at the island, “Oh, and I totally would love some coffee.”

“I’ve got coffee,” Mahon said, turning with the pot in hand and four mugs. He set them down and poured. “Ark has the food, and Torben is tossing out the plates to everyone. I’ll also be adding strawberry jam to the shopping list because we need some with our girl here.”

“Damn straight. Oh, and black raspberry without seeds too,” she put out there. “I like to mix up which jams I have in the mornings and sometimes when I’m feeling really out there I will use both. That’s when you have to watch out because means I’m feeling all kinds of saucy.”

“Uh-huh,” they all said before shooting looks at one another. “I’ll add it to the list,” Mahon said quietly with a grin. “I have a feeling we could be in trouble with this firecracker, guys.”

“Nah, she’s a damned fine good woman,” Torben said setting her plate before her and the jar of jam. “Use the jam wisely, that’s all she wrote in that jar there, Goldie girl.”

“Enough for two slices of toast so it's perfect,” she said and began to scrape to get the amount out that she needed. She winked at her guys and took a bite of her toast, making sure to moan happily as she did so. Looking up at Ark, she grinned, “Wanna taste?”

“Allergic, but thank you for the offer,” he said with a smile. “Strawberries and I do not get along in the least. Makes me look like a blowfish on crack, and makes me sound a lot like one of the Chipmunks. Then I usually pass out and these two finally stop laughing long enough to get me help.”

“Well then I don’t want you to have a taste.” She looked to Torben and Mahon, grinning she said, “Who wants a taste?” She wanted a kiss, damn it all to hell and back again. She had found she was very addicted to their kisses and wanted one. Now.

“Since I’m on this side of the counter I will,” Torben said, leaning in. His tongue flicked over her lips and he grinned, “Yummy,” he whispered. Then he gave her a kiss, full out tongues twisting and dueling, their breath combining, perfection.

When they parted, Goldie was left panting and nodded. Licking her lips, she smiled. “That’s what I needed.” She loved being kissed by these men, having them close to her, being able to touch them and know they wanted that from her as well.

Torben threw her a wink before he went to grab another plate that he passed to Mahon. The last one he took for himself as Arkadios brought his own to the counter. "So what's on the schedule for today?" Mahon asked, picking up his cup of coffee.

"Meetings until lunch, and then we need to start setting up some more after," Arkadios said. "I have to go out to the lake site and see how they're doing."

"And I need to make calls to the people we met last night. I need to schedule them in so we can ensure we strike while the iron is hot," she told them and licked her lips again. "It will be better to take as many clients from our competition as we can."

Nodding, Torben grabbed the pepper to add some to his eggs. "We definitely need to touch base at the very least. We've have an edge already because they like us. And we are known to always get the job done right and just as the client wants."

"Or better," Ark added around a piece of toast.

"Exactly. That is something I heard far more times than you can possibly imagine, just how much better you were from others. It was one of the reasons my former bosses hated you guys so much."

"Your former bosses will always hate us," Mahon said. "We don't gouge our clients. We give them a good price, but we do warn them that unexpected costs must be considered. Especially in renovations, because what you see isn't what you always get. They respect the honesty we give them. That's why we get so much more business than those assholes."

"Exactly. I had tried so hard to adjust billing when I worked for them, but it didn't always work, which bugged me to the ends of the Earth." She just wished she had known these three men before, she would have sent a lot of the clients their way.

"Hell, if you ever see something out of place let us know," Torben told her. "We screw up on occasion just like everyone else does. Sorry, Goldie, but we're not perfect," he shrugged and grinned her direction. "So yeah, if you catch us in a mistake speak up. We'll damn well fix it any way we can."

"Don't worry, if I see something that bothers me I will tell you. You all know that I have no issue at all with talking to you guys. I happen to care very much for you." She loved them and she wanted them to realize they were hers. And she wasn't scared to speak her mind around them.

“We know that,” Ark said, reaching out to touch her hand. “You’d never have let us mark you as ours if you didn’t. You’re not the sort to cave to pressure. They were just stating a fact, darling. Now, eat up. We all need to get moving or you two,” he pointed his fork at Torben and Mahon, “are going to be late for your meetings, and I’ll never get out to the damned site when I need to.”

She nodded and winked at him. She ate her food and then when she was finished she felt better, her shoulder that was. She tossed the veggies back into the freezer and began to clean up. “Don’t argue,” she told Ark before he could even start. “You cooked so I can clean up.”

“Fine,” he held his hands up and backed away. “I’m going to shower and then we can head out. We’ve got a full schedule, and I know better than to argue with a woman armed with a spatula.” He smiled and kissed her lightly before turning and heading out of the room.

Goldie smiled happily. God she loved that man. Nodding, she winked at him, “All right, go and get your body washed and if you are still in the shower when I’m done, I will come and get in there with you. Okay?”

“You’d better, babe. I plan to have a long, hot shower and scrubbing everything twice,” Ark called out. His voice was getting further away but she didn’t have any trouble hearing him. “Might even take some extra time today for some personal hygiene.”

His laugh could be heard, slightly taunting. “You’d better hurry up, sugar,” Mahon said from her side as he brought the rest of the dishes over. “We’ll help so you can get up there before he uses all the hot water.”

“We’re on a tankless system, we don’t run out of water,” Torben commented.

“It’s a saying, dude, get with it,” Mahon bitched.

That had her smiling and she pulled Mahon close to kiss him and then kissed Torben as well. “I love you both,” she said and stepped back, drying her hands on the towel she winked. “So I don’t run out of water, I’m leaving you to the dishes. Thanks, guys!” she said and raced from the room, listening to their laughter and smiling happily as she moved to the shower and Arkadios.

“You left them doing the dishes didn’t you?” Arkadios asked, pushing the shower door open as she walked into the bathroom. “Sneaky little female. Dirty pool you know, right,” he said softly. “Not that I mind but paybacks are a bitch in this house.”

She shrugged and said, “Tomorrow you can do dishes, and I will shower with them.” She tugged free of her borrowed shirt and stepped into the shower with him. “For now I’m so happy just being able to have this moment with you.” She knew Arkadios would always have a very special place in her heart.

Pulling her to him with an arm around her waist, he shut the door. “I’m very happy you are here with me as well. It’s even better that you’re naked,” he whispered with a grin. Lots and lots of teeth to that grin. He slid his tongue over his lips, pulling her attention fully to his mouth. “I think I’m still a little hungry though. But I’m craving something sweet, maybe a little honey.”

Backing her to the bench on the back wall, he sat her down before kneeling. He pulled her ass to the edge and lowered his head. “Mmm, slick and pink,” he whispered. His mouth was on her a moment later, his tongue sliding deep into her pussy.

She lifted her ass to him, whimpering when she spoke again, “Always gonna be wet for you, Ark.” Goldie’s words were said with such need, such desperation. She would always need him and she was fine with that.

He gave a growl as he ran his tongue over her pussy and around her clit. He pressed two fingers deep into her and stroked her in time to his licking and small nips. Then he began to suck her clit, his fingers moving faster, deeper.

Bracing her hands on the bench ledge, she began to rock on him—pressing, pushing and moving as he moved. Crying out, she whimpered, “There.” He was hitting her just right, deep inside. That motion combined with his mouth was driving her so close to the edge that she was ready to jump.

He sucked hard on her throbbing clit, the suction so intense. Then his teeth began a slow nibble on her pussy, teasing her as he pressed another finger deep. “Come for me, love. Before I give you my cock and fuck you all over again.”

Goldie couldn’t deny Arkadios anything. Arching against him, she came. Her whole body shuddered with the true force of her orgasm. The scream lodged in her throat, but she refused to let it free because of the close confines of the shower. Instead, a hiss of a sound was heard and the purring in the back of her throat had him grinning.

“There’s my girl,” he murmured softly with a chuckle. Pulling her up, he turned her around and bent her over, “Brace yourself on the seat, darling. It’s time to fuck you hard,” he warned before his cock filled her pussy.

A low keening cry escaped from Goldie’s lips, but she did as he instructed, which made him proud. Legs braced apart and hands on the small seat, she lifted her ass in the air and moved with him—pushing and pulling, tugging and squeezing.

“Fucking hell, you are amazing,” he snarled, running his hands over her flesh. Squeezing her ass, he smacked her lightly on each cheek. He was taking her hard, his balls bouncing off her mound with each thrust of his cock, deep into her slick sheath.

The only sounds in the shower was flesh to flesh, grunts, moans, and the low keening sound she made as she came ever closer to orgasm. His hands held her hips tight, keeping her tilted at the perfect angle to take his cock deep. “Coming, Goldie, you with me?” he snarled. His motions were rougher, harder, his cock starting to pulse deep in her pussy.

“YES!” This time she did scream. He felt her knees shake; her body tense and saw the gooseflesh that covered her body. It was evident and clear that her orgasm was right there on the brink. On the surface and just needed a small push to send her over.

His roar vibrated around them, the glass enclosure actually shaking from its force. “Mine,” he snarled as he came, his cock deep and seed exploding toward her womb. His fingers were clenched tight on her flesh, too tight he acknowledged, but couldn’t loosen them. He had to keep her to him until she took every last drop of his seed.

Dropping her forehead to the seat on top of her hands, Goldie simply shook. After some time she finally spoke, a croaked whisper but she spoke all the same. “God,” she panted, “love you. So much.”

Chuckling, his hands slid over her ribs, to her shoulders and pulled her up. “I’m not done with you yet, darling. But we should wash up and find a bed. I plan to spend most of the day buried inside of you. I’m finding I have a rather insatiable need for you right now.”

“But don’t we have things to do today?” If not, she was all for spending the entire day in bed with this man.

“You’re right,” he muttered. “I wish you weren’t, but you are. We have to go into the office and deal with everything. And I do need to get out to

the site at some point,” he didn’t sound all that happy. “So we’ll wash up, dress, and behave like adults for the day. Tonight though, you are mine.”

“I might just take a nap sometime today though so I will be able to keep up with you, my insatiable and amazing bear.”

Another growl before he smacked her bottom. “We need to get moving since someone,” he shot her a dark look, “felt the need to remind me we have work to do. Shame on that someone,” he clicked his tongue. But he was grinning as he gave her a hug, “Wash up, love, the lads won’t be feeling very patient if we keep going up here.”

“They will always be understanding of this need we have. They have it too. It’s just the way it is,” she said with a shrug and began to clean up.

“And it makes me all kinds of happy too, knowing you want me every bit as much as I want you.”

“Oh darling, we definitely want you a hell of a lot more. We’re a fairly horny lot,” he grinned at her as he took the soap. “At least when we get around you. You enter the room and all the blood seeps out of the brain and heads south.”

“Well it’s a good thing you do because it kept me from having my head handed to me when you guys found me in your home, right?” she asked and slicked her soapy hands over her body. When she was finished, she rinsed and looked at him, “Are we ready to get out?”

“Ready,” he said, making a face. He stepped out and grabbed towels, passing her one. “We didn’t know it was a female that was in here that night. You gave us one hell of a shock. I wasn’t exactly pleased to know someone was in our home because I’m slightly possessive of the place. It’s where we let the day go and just relax. Yes, we occasionally have guests and parties here, but they all leave at some point. I’m glad it was you though, little mate.”

“I’m very happy I found your place that night as well,” Goldie admitted quietly. “I’m just very happy to have you, to be with you and to know I am where I belong. That I’m finally with the men I think I’ve been waiting my whole life for.”

Smiling, he pulled her close and gave her a soft kiss. “I’ve never been so glad of an intruder,” he teased. Dropping another quick kiss to her lips, he drew back and hung up his towel. “Get a move on, little mate. We have to get into the office and soon,” he said padding into the bedroom.

“Ah yes, office sounds like a good place to be. A place where you guys can rest without me attacking you,” she teased. “Go. I’m going to brush out my hair and braid it. I will be in to get clothes shortly.”

Nodding, he turned to give her a grin, “Don’t take too long, they will leave without us, and my vehicles are both still at the office. So we’d have to hitchhike, which is not pretty out here in the boonies, babe.” That said he turned and kept on walking.

“Oh honey, I seriously doubt they would leave me.” Or so she hoped at least! “They wouldn’t, would they? Leave me?” she asked now with total uncertainty in her voice. “They wouldn’t, right?”

“Hey,” he was back and wrapping her in his arms. He already had socks, boots, and jeans on, but no shirt yet. “I was teasing you,” he whispered next to her ear. Arkadios started to rock her slowly, “I was only teasing, Goldie. They wouldn’t leave you. Me totally, but never you, sweetheart.”

“I know. I just…” She took a deep breath and looked up. “I just wasn’t sure,” she admitted to him. “I guess that was my biggest thing. The worry and the fear I was doing something wrong and it would make them want to leave me.”

“Shh,” he whispered, hugging her tight. “You’re our mate, Goldie. We’re not leaving you anywhere unless you want us to but even then, you’ll likely have a hell of a time getting us to go. We are rather protective if you hadn’t figured.” He tipped her face up and gave her kiss, “Finish getting ready, darling.” He stepped back and smiled, “Five minutes,” a warning for sure.

“Five minutes is good,” she told him softly. She then took off so she could finally get dressed.

Four minutes later, she was in the living room. “All right, I think I have everything. You ready as well?” she asked Arkadios.

Nodding, he grabbed up a bag, “Let’s go. Mahon and Torben are in the truck.” Holding the door for her, he followed her out and to the vehicle. Pulling open the back door, he helped her in before following her. Moments later, they were moving with Torben behind the wheel and obviously impatient.

“Sorry I took so long.” She reached out and placed her hand on Torben’s shoulder. “Hey, you okay? We have plenty of time to get there you know. I promise it’s all good.” She liked to tell them they had appointments a half

hour or hour earlier than they really did so they had built-in time for everything.

“Even with your built-in keep-the-guys-moving schedules, we’re behind schedule,” Mahon said with a sigh. “Our morning meeting got bumped up and Jasmine only now thought to call and let us know,” a growl filled the cab of the truck and Mahon rolled his eyes toward her. “No you can’t kill her, Torben. Your mother would likely rip your nuts off if you did.”

“Jasmine is his sister, six years younger,” Ark whispered next to her ear.

That had her grinning and she shook her head. “Yeah, speaking of which, when am I going to get to meet your families? You guys mated me, but I know so very little about you. I would like to know more. Meet the people you love and all that fun stuff.”

“Next weekend you will be subjected to them all,” Torben muttered. “We’re having our semi-annual barbecue at the house. We have games and everyone crashes on the floor of various rooms, and then they all leave Sunday night. You’ll meet each and every single one of them.”

“You make it sound like it's going to be a hardship,” she asked with a frown. “Are they going to hate me because we have known each other for such a short period of time? And not only am I’m already sleeping with you all, but mated to you, and living with you as well?” Would they see her as a gold digger?

“It’s not a hardship,” Mahon answered. “But they do tend to be a little much after a while. Thus the reason why we only do this every six months. Any more and we’d all be raging alcoholics. They will love you and be happy for us. There are a number of bear shifters in our families, but also a bunch of humans. Be prepared for much unsolicited advice and information you never wanted to know, and will never be able to scrub from your brain. Ever.”

“Oh God. So should I order the brain bleach now so it will be on hand for later?” she teased. “I’m kidding. I just really hope you are right. I’m worried. I’ve never had to meet ‘the rents’ before, so this is all totally new to me. I really hope to be able to make friends with your families.”

“They will adore you,” Arkadios told her. “Though my sister will likely give you to the third degree. Mainly because it’s her daughter that comes here from time to time to stay with us. She’s pure mama bear that one.”

"Great. A momma bear being protective of her cub. Just promise she won't bite." Grinning, Goldie added, "However, if you want to bite me in

her place I wouldn't mind at all. Also, will I get to meet your niece? The one that loves all that pink?" her tone was teasing, joyful.

He gave her a growl and nipped her ear lightly. "You'll get to meet her. She'll be there. She'll also likely stay for the week since she'll have it off from school. So you'll get a lot of time with her. She's a sweetheart and you will adore her just as much as she'll adore you."

That had Goldie smiling. "Oh, and I am going to take the week off so I can spend it with her? I want to be able to get to know her. I want get to know everyone in your family because I really do want to fit in. I want to be accepted, I'm really looking forward to it."

"You can bring my car back to the house tonight," Arkadios told her. "You can hang onto the keys and use it whenever you need to. I'll bring the bike back so I have transportation when it's needed. You will need a credit card, just use whichever one you find in the safe in the office."

"Oh, will you take me for a ride on the bike?" Goldie loved motorcycles and she loved Arkadios as well. "I think perhaps we should ride the bike back and have one of the guys drive the car back. What are your thoughts on that one, love?"

"Might be difficult given Mahon needs to get his car back here too," he said. "But we can bring the vehicles back and then we can take a ride. Nothing says we can't right?" Ark smiled at her and pressed a kiss to her lips. Lifting his head, he sighed, "And we're nearly to the office. Get ready for one hell of a day, darling."

"I'm ready." Goldie smiled up at Ark and nodded, "Then I will expect that ride with you another time. I look forward to it." She touched Torben's shoulder and then Mahon's, "And if you guys ride too I would love to come with you one day. I don't ride bikes by myself. I have zero sense of balance on two wheels."

"We'll have to gather up all the bikes at some point and do a ride," Mahon said with a grin. "I think mine's still over at the apartment."

"It is," Torben nodded. "I know mine's at my parents. I'll see if my brother will bring it out when they come for the barbecue. Don't actually trust him on it, but he's better than letting my parents on the bloody thing."

"We need to figure out how to get them all back as well as the vehicles without having to do a dozen trips. I'm sure we will be able to somehow but really, your parents?" her whole tone and question shifted mid-sentence as

she whirled to look at Torben. “Your parents would get on a bike and ride it here?”

“They would. However, the condition of said bike would be questionable upon arrival,” Torben muttered. “Last time they took it out I had to get it detailed top to bottom, front to back. If I’d had any other choice than to leave it, there I’d have taken it. Unfortunately, at that time, it was out of the question for me to operate it legally and still get back here for a meeting first thing the next morning.”

“Do I even want to know what happened?” she asked with wide eyes. “Please tell me they didn’t do anything naked on it or I will never be able to look your parents in the eye.” She couldn’t think of what the couple would have or could have done to make him have to get the entire ride detailed other than that one thing.

“Then I’m not saying a thing,” he said with a shrug.

“But I will,” Mahon said with a chuckle. “They took it for a spin and all the nasty shit they did would curl your hair. Well, more,” he teased. “And that’s just the shit they subjected us to as they told the tale of their adventures. Torben was nine shades of green, and had to leave the room barely a third of the way through it.”

“Oh God,” she felt a little sick. “Do not say another word, Mahon, or I swear I’m making you sleep on the couch,” she grumbled and leaned back, “No one should ever think about their parents and them doing those things. All babies came by Immaculate Conception, at least that’s what the kids think.”

“Not me,” Arkadios said with a grin. “I know just how my parents ended up with me and my sister. But I don’t apparently have the same issues you and Torben do with the parents having sexual relations. Of course my parents aren’t with us any longer, so it likely makes it easier to think on such things. But Mahon’s are still kicking and he doesn’t have issues.”

“Hell no. Without that action, I’d have never come into the world. I don’t know what the big deal is. Sex is a natural part of relationships,” he said with a shrug.

“I don’t know either, but really it just kinda wigs me out to think of someone’s parents doing it. I don’t understand why, I just know what I feel,” Goldie told him. “I don’t like the thought of anyone older than me having sex.”

“Uh, we’re older than you,” Torben said turning his head to look at her. “Just pointing this out so we can follow your logic train.” He slowed and turned them into the parking lot for their building. A moment later, he swung into a parking stall and parked, turning the engine off.

“Oh shut it,” she grumbled and pushed on his shoulder. “Believe me when I tell you I don’t see you that way. I see you guys as mine and it is all that counts.”

“Uh-huh,” all three said before they vacated the truck. Arkadios helped her out and they headed for the main doors. “You do realize your logic is seriously twisted right?” Torben asked with a grin. He wrapped an arm around her shoulders as they walked.

“Yes I do, but shut up. I like my twisted logic like it is, and there is nothing no one can say to me to make me change my mind. I like being odd.” Most days at least. “Besides, you know you love me. Quirks and all.”

“Of course we do darling, you are the only one for us,” he said, pressing a kiss to her cheek. Dropping his arm, he pulled open the door. “Now we have a meeting to prep for and ten minutes if that before they arrive. We need to move fast.”

“Good point.” Goldie gave him a wink and pulled out of his arms. “See you guys later. I have to go and get the paperwork prepared, coffee started, pull maps. You go and do what you need as well.” She swatted Arkadios’s ass and grinned, “Love you, Ark.” She went to Mahon and turned her face up to him, “Give me a kiss and snuggle, and then I have to go.” After she got the same from Torben as well, she headed to do the work she had set out to do.

“Like you even have to ask, woman,” Mahon grinned and pulled her in close. Hugging her tight, he pressed a kiss to her lips and then a second and third. “Be good. If you need me I’ll be in the meeting, and then I have to finish getting everything ready for the tax bozos. I hate tax time. If you can, come and poke me around lunch time, otherwise I’ll just sit there until closing.”

“Don’t worry. I will come and poke, my grumpy bear. Then if I’m lucky he will lock me in his office and poke me right back.” Brushing her lips to his again, she then pulled back, patted his chest, and pulled out of his arms, “Go do what you have to do, honey, so we can have lunch later.” She then turned to Torben and gave him a cockeyed grin. “Well?”

“Well what?” he asked with a matching grin. He moved closer and wrapped his arms around her. Drawing her into him, he bent her back slightly. One hand moved to her ass and the other to her hair and then she was really leaning back. Only thing keeping her up was him. After that, it didn’t matter. His mouth was on hers and he was kissing her as if the world was about to end.

Goldie wrapped her arms around his neck and held him close. She kissed him back with the same ardent passion and fervor, and soon found herself wanting more. Her hands dipped into his shirt, fingers working on the buttons to bare his skin to her touch. A low moan came from her mouth as she rubbed against him. He released her mouth; she was panting and licked her lips. “Again,” came out in a whisper of a sound.

“Can’t,” he told her with a chuckle. Standing her upright, his hands held her until the world stopped spinning. Mostly. “I have a meeting to be at in about six minutes. You need to get the coffee on and grab the files I need. But after the meeting,” he gave her a growl. “There’s always my office.”

“Good,” she growled right back at him. “I will be waiting on your chair, naked. So make sure that you hurry.” Damn. Working with these men was going to be exhausting, but she was so the girl for the job. “Now go before you are too late.”

“Coffee,” he said to her brushing a kiss to her lips. “And remember to pull the blinds before you strip down. God help everyone if you leave those open. I’ll have to figure out how to hire an entire office,” he said with a smile. “I love you, Goldie, show them in when they arrive.”

“I love you too and don’t worry, I will pull them.” She didn’t want to give anyone a show they didn’t deserve. Maybe later for her other two men she would give a show.

Grinning, he wiggled his brows at her and then lifted his head. “Goldie darling,” Ark’s voice called to her. “Tell me there is coffee on?” he asked, coming back into view. He had changed into work boots and had a hardhat under his arm as well as a pile of paperwork.

“Uhm. There will be in just a minute,” she said with a grin and detangled herself from Torben. Walking past Ark, she patted his chest and looked up saucily, “And don’t be jealous, I’m going to demand another kiss from you after I get the coffee going.”

Frowning, he cocked his head to the side, “Why would I be jealous?” he asked. He followed on her heels she could feel him at her back. “All of us

are your mates, darling. We'll all need time with you alone, and we'll all need to be with you as a group. It's just how it works."

"I know that," she said with a grin, "I meant because I hadn't kissed you yet. We all knew I would go through each of you," she teased. "I'm happy you aren't jealous." Once the coffee was on, she turned to face Ark. "Especially since I get to spend an extra couple of minutes with you."

"I doubt you'll have that, darling," he said, setting his papers aside. Then he moved to her, his hands on the counter, his arms trapping her. "Pretty sure Torben's meeting is just pulling into the parking lot. You have maybe a minute before you have to go and greet them." Smart bear that he was, he didn't waste more time and kissed her, hard, fast and with lots of tongue.

When he finally released her, Goldie felt more than a little like liquid. "Goodness," she whispered and licked her lips. "You kiss me and I swear the world starts spinning. It's as if everything else has gone off the edge and it's only us."

"Door's opening," he said, pulling her up against him for another ravaging kiss. Mere seconds later, maybe minutes, he drew back. "I'll go and greet them, darling." With a quick kiss to her nose, he propped her against the counter before spinning and walking out of the lunchroom.

That had her grinning and she nodded, "Go, do what you need. I will be out as soon as I catch my breath and straighten my hair." Her men had a thing about pulling her hair out of its coif, not that she minded at all.

A deep chuckle was her only answer before some voices could be heard chatting quietly.

Chapter Eight

“Hello, Josie girl,” Arkadios scooped up the little girl and hugged her. She was giving it right back to him and giggling at whatever he was telling her. Grinning, he turned with the girl and pointed to Goldie before he set her on her feet. Straightening, he turned to greet a man and woman who were obviously the girl's parents with hugs, kisses, and back slapping before they came into the house.

“Goldie, darling, I'd like you to meet my niece, Josie,” he grinned down at the girl. “And her parents Martin and Laurie, my baby sister,” he added. “Everyone, this is Goldie,” he said with a smile just for her.

Goldie grinned at the family and felt her heart catching. The siblings looked alike and that meant Josie looked a great deal like her uncle, Arkadios. “Hello,” she said happily. “I'm so very happy to meet you,” she spoke aloud and held out a hand to the adults. Finally, she looked at the little girl and got down so she was at eye level with the child. “And I have heard a great deal about you. I look forward to hopefully becoming your friend so we can have girl secrets from the big boys that run around this place.”

“Pretty,” Josie said before throwing her arms around Goldie's neck. “Up please,” she demanded.

Chuckling, Arkadios shrugged at Goldie as Josie's parents groaned. “I think you have another admirer, darling.” His head turned as the bell rang again, “And the next folks are here. You guys all chat and I'll see who's here. Food and drinks are on the island; grab whatever you want to snack on. Dinner will be at seven like normal.”

Goldie happily picked up the child and cuddled her close. “You are a beautiful one, and so very cuddly like your uncle,” she confessed and cuddled the child closer to her as they walked into the living room.

“Goldie,” Arkadios was back again with some more people. “This is Darryn, Torben's brother and the savior of the motorcycle. As well, Torben's other brother, Mitchell, and his mate, Danielle. Guys and gal, this is Goldie our delicious little mate. Sit. Chat. Food and drinks are on the island. Dinner's at seven,” he said and was off again.

Goldie smiled at all of the people and shook her head. “Wow, you guys are like all really massive. Do you get fed steroids or something?” She wasn’t small by any stretch but so far, her mates and the men, as well as the woman, Danielle, were all freakishly tall. They were all well over six feet and that was simply strange for her.

“We’re big meat eaters,” the one Ark had introduced as Mitchell answered. “That and the good genes of our kind. We all tend to be fairly large,” he gave a shrug. “Wait until you meet dad, then we’ll talk about big guys.”

“I don’t think I wanna meet him,” Goldie whispered nervously and gave the little girl another squeeze and smiled, “You tell me, poppet, is your papaw a big ole bear that rumbles and growls and eats girls like me for dinner?”

Josie shrugged, “He tries but he’s always joking about it. He chases me around their yard sometimes just to make me giggle. He’s silly,” she told her with a firm nod.

“So sayeth a child, it must be true,” Torben said, coming into the room. He hugged his brothers and sister-in-law. Then he scooped up Josie for a big, noisy kiss that had her shrieking. “There are juice boxes in the kitchen for you half pint, and your mom has a snack ready too,” that said, he set her on her feet and let her loose.

Goldie grinned and stood. Moving to Torben’s side, she wrapped an arm around his waist and pulled him close. “Hey you,” she whispered quietly. “Everything out there okay?” He could tell she was nervous by the way, she held onto him.

“Of course it is, sweetheart,” he said pressing a kiss to her lips. “Don’t worry, Goldie, everyone is loving you. Josie is even now, singing your praises to her parents. But if you feel overwhelmed at all tonight, just grab one of us alright? We won’t be far from you for very long at any point.”

“Well she’s a little angel.” Goldie fell hard for the little bundle of energy. She didn’t care the child had the most horrific ideas of good decor in a room. She was, after all, just simply a child. “Thank you though. I will keep that in mind, promise.”

“Good,” he said and kissed her gently. His head jerked up and he grinned, “The parents are here. Come on, you’ll love mom. Don’t let dad fool you with his gruff act. He likes to pretend he’s a grumpy ass bear, but he’s a marshmallow and wrapped tightly around mom’s finger.”

“Right. The big scary bear shouldn’t worry me in the least,” she teased. “All right. I’m as ready as I am going to get,” she said and smiled up at him. “Let’s go and meet your momma and daddy so we can be very sure they like me and won’t try to get between the four of us.”

“Oh, they won’t,” he grinned at her as if he knew something she didn’t. Catching her hand, he tugged her out to the front of the house and lifted a hand toward the couple. “Hello, mum, you are looking spectacular as always,” he said, leaning in to hug and kiss the tiny woman’s cheek.

“And you, my boy, are up to something if you are being so flattering,” the woman said, smacking Torben’s arm.

Snorting, he turned to the large man who was taller and broader than Torben or his brothers. “Pops, keeping mom in line are you?” he asked, getting a hug and solid thump to his back from him.

“Hardly. That woman runs my life as you damn well know, kiddo,” Torben’s father said with a chuckle when his mate punched him, hard.

“Raymond!” Torben grinned at the second male that came around the truck. “You made it,” he hugged him and got another solid back thump.

“Didn’t think I would, but the flight got in early and your mum hauled my ass here. So when I pass out in a chair, be a good lad and cover me with a blanket would you?” he asked with a grin.

“Absolutely,” Torben assured him with a laugh. “Come meet my mate,” he said to everyone. Moving away from the group, he stepped next to Goldie and wrapped an arm around her waist urging her closer. “Goldie, this is my mum, Jeannie, and my dad, David. This is Raymond, my mum’s other mate and Darryn’s biological father. Everyone, this is Goldie.”

Goldie grinned and looked at the big men and smiled, “Hi there.” She leaned into Torben and watched the byplay between mates, and couldn’t stop smiling. That was what she wanted, what she needed so very badly. She wanted and needed to have that happiness. When she looked up at Torben she relaxed and sighed. And she had it with these men.

“She’s a cute one, Tor,” Raymond said. Then he grunted as Jeannie elbowed him hard. “What? I’m just speaking the truth, babe. She is cute and she’s in love with your baby boy. That should make you happy instead of pounding on your mates.”

“My mates need to be pounded now and again so they remember who’s in charge,” she muttered.

“You are,” Raymond and David said in unison with a grin over her head to the other.

She smacked them both in the gut and then stepped forward. “Welcome to the family, Goldie,” she said, poking her son until Torben moved. Then she hugged her close, “You ever have any questions or worries, you just call and talk to me. Men don’t always know the fears of a woman with multiple mates.”

Goldie smiled and hugged the woman back. This was nice. She had never really had much of a mother figure, so for this acceptance to be given so easily, so readily, it nearly brought her to her knees. “Thank you for that,” she whispered. “They just don’t understand what it is to be a woman in love with more than one man at a time,” she teased. Pulling back, she nodded, “And I do.”

“Hey,” Torben put in a token protest before glaring over at his father who was snickering.

“Mama D,” Arkadios came out of the house and scooped up the woman. Swinging her around, he kissed her soundly on the cheek. “How you doing?” he asked as he put her back on her feet.

“I’m well, Arkadios,” Jeannie said, fixing her hair. Then she nailed him with a look, “You look tired, Arkadios. Are you sleeping enough? Are you eating properly? Have you been taking your vitamins like you should? Maybe you need some other supplements.” Ark looked like a deer caught in the headlights as David snorted out a laugh.

“And she’s in mothering mode,” Raymond shook his head. “I think about now is the right time for a drink.”

“Agreed,” David said with a shake of his head. “Come along, Goldie. You can tell us all about how you met our boy and the other delinquents while Ark tries to get out of Jeannie’s clutches.”

“Uhm...not so sure that is a story I want to tell,” Goldie said with a grin. “It’s actually not such a good story. How about if I make one up instead?” she teased. “Because it really puts me in a very, very bad light and I don’t know I want you guys to see me like that right away.”

“Well you can tell us,” Raymond said, hooking his arm through one of hers as David did the same on the other side. “Or we’ll get Mahon loaded and have him tell us. Trust me. We have zero scruples about how we get the story as long as we get it.”

“We’re also not above blackmail either,” David told her as they walked. “And we’re damned good at it too.”

“Oh God.” Goldie’s heart sunk as the fathers pulled her away from her mates and toward a quiet corner of the room. “Simple truth?” she asked and gulped. “I kinda, sorta broke into their home one night as I ran away from so-called friends that I was camping with. So yeah. That’s how I met them.”

“Well that’s definitely the short version, give us the full length version,” Raymond said. They’d reached the sofa and as one, the men sat, dragging her down between them. Both turned toward her, an elbow up on the back and they waited.

Goldie then proceeded to tell the men absolutely everything. It was as if they had reached into her and pulled out every little detail, minus the sex, that she had to offer in her meeting the men. “And that’s that,” she said with a shrug. “That’s the non-cliff notes version.”

“Better,” David said with a nod as he watched her. “Don’t look so worried, Goldie. I already had my sacrificial human female of the day and am stuffed.” He grinned then and got to his feet. “Now I think I should go and rescue Arkadios before he runs off screaming.”

Raymond was still watching her as David walked off. “He likes you,” he said with a grin. “I do as well just so you know. And Jeannie likely already has your wedding fully planned down to the centerpieces. But I do have to ask, how are you really doing with all this?” he asked gently.

“Actually, I’m really fine with it. I love those three men more than I ever in a million years believed I would love someone. Those men make it easier to live life. They make me happy, and I really hope I’m able to give the same back to them. They are incredible men, they really are.”

“Well you are definitely making them happy from what I can see,” Raymond told her.

“Mahon!” Arkadios’s voice.

“What?” Mahon bellowed from somewhere.

“Your dad hit the same fucking tree!” Ark again.

“Is mom in the front seat?” Mahon.

“I’m going to assume that’s her head bobbing up and down and go with yes!” Ark yelled before he broke into laughter.

“For fuck’s sake!” Mahon snarled and stormed through. “I swear to the God I ended up with nympho parents,” he muttered as he went past.

“And if you manage to survive the parental barrage, you’ll do fine,” Raymond said before popping up. “I should probably go assist with getting the truck back where it should be.” He actually managed to look concerned for maybe two seconds before bursting into gales of laughter.

Goldie couldn’t help but laugh. Shaking her head, she just giggled and looked at her men. “Like parent, like son?” she shot to Mahon. “Because I don’t think they are the only nymphos in the family, love.”

“I don’t fucking do it while operating a motor vehicle!” Mahon hollered over his shoulder as he went out the door.

Raymond grinned, “Come on, this is always amusing. I swear his parents are stuck in the seventies and we’re not exactly sure why. They are funny, warm, and way too horny for their own good. As is evident by the fact they seem to hit the same tree every time they come here.” He headed for the door but looked back, “Coming?”

Giggling, Goldie couldn’t help herself, “Seems as if that is a question you should ask Mahon’s mother.” She couldn’t help it! She knew that it was bad, very bad of her, but seriously, it was right there in front of her and she couldn’t pass on giving her men some hell.

“Geez, you’re as bad as those boys,” he groaned and wrapped his arm around her. “You’ll do, darling,” he chuckled, walking out with her slowly. “But if you have any trouble keeping them in line, you give us a call. We’ll gladly coach you from the sidelines.”

“I think I would like that.” Goldie relaxed immediately against the older man and smiled. “I think it’s going to be a very good life. One that I look forward to a great deal.” She was happy and it showed in the way she carried herself, the way she looked around and everything.

“Well, we’re only about two hours away so convince the fur balls to bring you out at some point,” he said. “You can come for the weekend, we’ll do up a barbecue. Nowhere near as extravagant as this of course, but we can do a day on the lake with water skiing, or maybe just lounge on the boat soaking up the sun and then have some good old-fashioned home cooking. David does a mean rib, and his sauce is to die for, literally. You ever learn the secret ingredient you’re never heard from again.”

She snickered and shook her head, “I would, but I can’t swim and I’m terrified of water, so I think the whole water skiing thing and swimming thing will be out of the question. I would be more than happy to stay on the safe shore and watch you guys though.”

“Well then, you can sit in the Jacuzzi and drink margaritas while they all showboat for you,” Raymond told her. They came to a stop as a frazzled woman climbed out of the truck looking too pleased. “That’s Miranda, Mahon’s mother. Though she may ask you to call her Daffodil as it’s her name given by the moon goddess or some such crap,” he whispered in her ear. “The gent trying to do up his pants before getting out is his father, James. Can’t recall his otherworldly name but I’m sure one of them will tell you.”

Snickering, Goldie shook her head. “Right. I will keep that in mind.” She liked the comfort she felt around these people. It calmed her, made her feel at peace.

Ark handed Mahon’s mom a tissue and tapped his cheek with a grin not quite hidden. As she mopped her face and talked to Mahon, he turned and met Goldie’s gaze. Snickering, he moved a little ways away as he appeared to fight with his laughter.

“For the love of the God, mother,” Mahon said.

“Don’t be so tense, my boy,” she patted his arm with a happy grin. “Look at how relaxed your father is.”

Arkadios doubled over wheezing now as he tried to fight his laughter.

She began to snicker, holding her hand over her mouth and just giggled. Finally, she couldn’t help herself and her snickers became audible. When Mahon cast her a look, she was unable to stop herself from laughing aloud.

“This is not funny, Goldie,” he said turning back to his mother. “Dad is so damned relaxed, he hit the same tree again. Can you not come out here once without slamming into it?”

“Mother Earth will forgive us as she always does. We just got carried away in the heat of the moment is all,” his mother clicked her tongue. “You could do with some of the same I’m thinking, my son. You are much too tense. You should have your mate there deal with that.”

All eyes turned to Goldie. Many were filled with laughter, but a few held something else.

“Hey, don’t look at me. We relax quite often. I can’t help he’s wound as tightly as he is,” Goldie said before she could think twice about her words. She then felt her cheeks heat and added, “Well crap. See?” She shook her head. “Told you I just blurt out the first thing that pops into my head.”

Raymond was howling in laughter, no help there. Arkadios was on the ground wheezing for air he was laughing so hard, no help there. Torben had

his back turned, shoulders hunched. Mighty suspicious, no help there either. Everyone else were either grinning, chuckling, or pretending to be looking at something else. All except Mahon who looked about ready to throttle someone. Likely his mother.

Goldie shook her head and moved to Mahon. Taking his hand with hers, she gave it a squeeze and smiled up at him. "Come on. While they are all pissing themselves laughing, how about you and I go inside and have a nice lovely drink and wait for them to come join us?"

He threw another look at his parents, made a sound of disgust, and nodded. "Good idea," he said with a growl. Pressing a kiss to her temple, he wrapped an arm around her waist. He practically pushed her toward the front door. Mahon was walking quickly, but his arm around her waist kept her from stumbling at any point.

Goldie stopped Mahon when they were just inside of the home and cupped his cheek lovingly with her hand. "I love you, Mahon. How about you and I go up to the bedroom so you can kiss me in private?"

He let out a sigh that shook his whole frame. He rested his forehead to hers, his hands on her hips and after a long moment nodded. "I think that might be best," he said softly. "I need a moment away from everyone after that."

"I know you do, love," Goldie told him and rubbed her hand up and down his arm as she guided him from the living room and toward their bedroom. When the door closed behind them, she turned and simply wrapped her arms around his middle, holding onto him to keep him close.

His arms folded around her and squeezed. "I adore my parents, but I swear," he let out a growl. "I just don't get them. And I hate feeling like I'm the one that's the parent in these situations." His nose brushed over her neck lightly as his arms loosened a little.

"They are in love." Goldie didn't even hesitate when she spoke, "That's why they behave as they do. They are in love just as I love you. Just as we have a very hard time keeping our hands off each other. They don't deny themselves. They give in and they take every single chance they can get to reaffirm their love. I think it's actually sweet."

Mahon's head lifted and he stared down at her. "I don't care they can't keep their hands off one another. I care about the fact they do it while operating a vehicle. What if that hadn't been the tree? What if it been you or

Josie? That's what I'm trying to make them see and they just fucking don't."

"Oh." She hadn't thought of that. "Have you actually said those words to them? That you don't care they can't keep their hands to themselves and so on? About the vehicle? It could be they simply don't see it. They may simply not see there is an issue there?" Sometimes people get 'tunnel vision'. She knew she could do that from time to time as well.

"Yes, I've said the words," he growled. Mahon shut his eyes and seemed to be forcing himself to calm. "But all they see is the tree. It's just a tree after all. Which given their stubbornness of sticking in the seventies I'm not fully getting. They seem to believe they could never hurt someone, anyone. I've tried to explain that while they may not intend to, should Josie or another dash out unexpectedly, they could very well kill that person. Which would be unforgivable."

"It would. It would be bad. Maybe if we talked to them together? I think perhaps we need to stage an intervention for them and their ways. I don't know how that would work or be received, but I will do anything to ensure you are not upset any longer."

His eyes moved over her face and finally, he gave a nod. "Alright. Thank you, Goldie," he said quietly. Leaning in, he pressed a kiss to her lips, his hands sliding over her back slowly. He nipped at her lip before drawing back. "We should likely get back to the party."

"Actually I think you and I both need to get naked. Maybe a shower before we return to the party?" she offered with a grin. Goldie's hands moved up and under his shirt, lightly she caressed him and waited, her eyes on his for his decision.

A flare of interest in his eyes had her hands moving higher. "They will wonder why it's taking so long for us to come back down you do realize. All of them know I cool off really fast. So there's no way you'd be taking so long to calm me."

Goldie shrugged and grinned, "And I care why? I honestly don't care they know what we are doing. You are mine and I am yours."

"You are everything, Goldie." He lifted a hand and used a finger to stroke her cheek. "You are amazing, strong, sweet, and yet have a nifty little vindictive streak." Mahon smiled before he let out a long breath. "A shower would be good. Not having to go back down there would be better."

“Then you and I need to have ourselves a shower. I do believe that would be a wonderful thing.” She bit her lower lip as she spoke. “I look forward to being naked with you.” Naked was a terrific thing, especially with her guy.

“You just want to get me naked,” he grinned. “I see your ploy now, sneaky female. But it is all right by me.” He pushed on her hips slightly, moving her back as he stepped from the wall. “Get naked quickly, Goldie, or we’ll have to explain why you needed new clothing on top of the delay.”

Goldie’s hands moved to the clothes and she stripped as quickly as she possibly could. Licking her lips, she went to him when he was naked as well. Hands on his hips she tugged him closer, tilting her face up to him in need.

His mouth crashed onto hers, slotting together perfectly, his tongue sliding deep to duel with hers. The low growl he made vibrated through her at every point of contact with his body. Mahon slapped his hands to her ass, cupping and squeezing each globe in turn.

Lifting herself, using his shoulders and the wall of the shower, she hooked her legs around his hips and rubbed against him. When she released his lips, she was panting. She pressed her forehead to his. “Mahon, please,” she begged.

He lifted her up and pressed his cock to her, “Take me in,” he demanded. He kissed her again, his teeth nipping at her lip gently. His mouth moved along her cheek, then lower, to her neck and shoulder.

Adjusting herself on him, Goldie slowly moved over him and then took him deep inside of her pussy. Leaning back, she adjusted herself so she could move up and then back down once more on him. Tilting her head to the side, she gave him full access to her neck and waited.

Sharper teeth scraped over her skin, his growl filling the shower stall. Mahon’s hands moved to her hips, thrusting into her slowly as she met him. “Perfection,” he whispered quietly against her skin. His teeth skating a path to her mating mark, the one he’d left previously, and he nipped.

She cried out in pleasure from the bite, no other word for the sob that came from her throat. “Mahon!” his name came out in a shout and moan combination. “There. God right there.” She squeezed him with her inner muscles, her pussy milking him with intense need and happiness.

He thrust into her harder, faster. The slap of their flesh meeting loudly, though nearly drowned out by his growls. “Mine,” he snarled and bit her

harder. His teeth holding her down as his cock slammed up and into her.

“Always.” Her nails scraped over his shoulders and back. The water cascading over and around them made her pleasure even stronger, more intense. She rode with the moment, rode him as well, and loved every single moment of it.

One thrust, another and then, complete bliss. Her name from his lips was a moan. He held her down over him as his body shook with his release. Mahon didn’t let her shoulders go, and his fingers dug a little harder into her hips.

She didn’t release him; if anything she held him even tighter. Shivering, she rubbed her cheek to his neck and rumbled in her happiness and joy. “Hell yeah,” she moaned against his neck.

Mahon’s tongue slid over her neck lightly. “If we didn’t have people downstairs who would invade our privacy, I’d suggest another round. But since they will, cheerfully and with cameras, I think we should clean up and head down.”

“Damn, that’s too bad,” she mumbled and shivered. “My nerves are wound so tightly from the expectation of meeting all of your families,” she whispered honestly.

“Most of them are fairly normal. Just my family is a little weird unfortunately.” Mahon let out a sigh and straightened up slightly. “I should warn you there will likely be photos. A lot of photos. My mother tends to travel with every photo album she owns and whips them out at the most inopportune and inappropriate moments. Be warned also, there will be naked photos of the parents in there. Try not to look until she starts telling you about the photo. It’s the only way to save you from permanent scarring.”

“Oh my.” She licked her lips and dropped her head on his shoulder. “Well then,” she sighed. “I will trust you to help keep me from being scarred and never being able to look at your parents again. Please?”

“I will do my best, Goldie, but she will separate you from the pack, corner you, and whip them out. I don’t even know where she hides them, but she always has them on her, at least the most embarrassing among them all.”

She laughed at that and shook her head. “Well just keep hold of me so she can’t steal me away,” Goldie’s tone was teasing and light. “Come on,

big boy. Let's do what we need to do so we can get through this day. Okay?"

Nodding, he set her down on her feet. Reaching around, he drew his hand back with the soap in it. "Wash up and then we'll go downstairs. Quick though or I'll say to hell with it. I'll lock and barricade the door, and we'll just stay here until they all leave."

Goldie couldn't help but laugh at that one and shake her head. "Oh honey, we both know your niece wouldn't let us stay here for too long." Sad but true. "So we should get out just so we can do what we need to do and get through this night. As soon as they all leave, I say we come back up here and have some more fun. Deal?"

"Arkadios's niece," he said looking at her. "Not mine. I'm just an honorary uncle like Torben is until someone's about to get in shit for getting her hyped up on sugar before returning her to her parents. Then it's all Ark."

"Right, see and that is why she wouldn't let us be stuck in here all night. Besides, I really do want to meet your parents. I want to know the families of the men I love. So let's get ourselves out of here shall we?"

Taking the soap from her, he muttered nasty things mostly under his breath. "You just live to torture me don't you? That's all right, I will remember this later." He stepped under the water before easing back and scrubbing quickly. One more dunk and then he turned the water off. "Out, female. We apparently have annoying people to go and entertain for the next however many hours until this hell is over."

"I love you too, big boy," Goldie called out and stepped out of the shower. Grabbing her towel, she began to dry off, turning and watching Mahon as she did so. "Are you going to be okay, honey? Really, are you okay?"

He gave a shrug as he began to dry, his body still tense. "I sometimes wonder why I was the one to get the irresponsible parents. As a kid, it had its good moments. They'd let us do anything just so we'd experience it. But really, isn't a parent supposed to stop you from doing stupid shit? To teach you why it's dumb and not let you nearly kill yourself and your friends at nearly every turn?" He let out a sigh, "I just wish they belonged to someone else now more than not. Does that make me a horrible son?"

"No, honey, it doesn't make you a horrible son. It makes you one that doesn't understand his parents, but I think that is every child honestly. We

all struggle to learn them, at least the people I've talked to have always done that. Just love them, honey. That's all I can suggest."

"I do love them but," he tossed the towel over the shower door. "I don't know. They frustrate the shit out of me. They just don't seem to see the world the same way. A prime example is their grand entrance. I've tried every way I could to get them to see they could kill someone, but they just keep saying they'd never do that. It's like we're from two different planets at opposite ends of the universe."

"I don't know what to tell you, honey, I really don't. As much as I hate to say it, maybe something needs to happen. Maybe somehow, put a 'faux accident' into play somehow? Place a dead animal under their vehicle or on the bumper. I know how tacky and terrible that sounds but if it helps, it's worth it, right?"

"Won't work. They'll just do some sort of ceremony to speed its soul to the next world. I know these crazy people, Goldie. Unfortunately, until they kill a person, I don't think they'll ever truly get it. Sadly, I have tried absolutely everything in my power. I even took their keys and spark plugs from the vehicles and they just continue happily on."

"Goodness. I don't know then, honey. I pray that never happens because something tells me your parents would never live it down. Taking a life that is. I just," she shrugged, "I just want to be accepted and fit in."

"I know," he said, running his hands through his damp hair. "Enough of this. We need to get dressed and back downstairs. I'm not going to cure my parents of their idiocy tonight, or anytime soon from what I know of them."

"All we can do is simply live and let live, honey. We will figure it all out somehow and someday. I just hope that you are right and no one truly gets hurt." She didn't think his parents, or him, would live through it if they hurt someone.

"Ditto," he said and smiled. "Come on, let's get dressed again. Then I need a drink, a very large, very strong drink. And space from my parents. Hopefully everyone else is here and out on the deck. It'll give me a few more minutes to ensure I've got my mood under control."

"And if you need, you can always turn to me. I'm more than willing to give you someone to lean on anytime and anywhere, Mahon, you do know that right? You can turn to me at anytime at all."

"I know, Goldie," he smiled slightly. Reaching out, he caught her hand and tugged her toward him. "I also know Torben and Arkadios are there for

me too. We're a unit. A team, I do understand that. Sometimes though I will want to just hide out for a while."

She smiled and nodded, "Just keep in mind when you hide out from me I will track your sexy ass down, and make you do all kinds of wonderful things to me to make it up. That or I might spank you," she tossed out.

"So I'm not allowed to hide out? Ever?" he asked. "I only ask because sometimes it's just better to let me chill for a while. Not too long, I don't want to stew or whatever. But a little bit of time is usually good. Even Torben and Ark know that."

"As long as you tell me and don't just disappear, we will be good. I just don't want to lose you, Mahon. Even if it's a mental retreat from me, I don't want to lose you. I happen to love you too stinking much."

"Hey," he let her hand go and put both of his on her face. Tipping her head back, he stared into her eyes. "You're not ever going to lose me, Goldie. Not for a very long time. I won't disappear, but I may not think to tell you I'm going to hide out. My thought processes aren't usually that clear when I need to duck away for a minute or two."

"I will try to look for the signs then," she assured him. "I will just need to watch. Maybe I will ask the guys to let me know when you need your alone time too," she murmured. "I don't want us to be upset with each other because I assume something and it's the wrong something."

"I know, little mate. This is hard," he said softly. "Mating is a whole new step and a challenge, especially with so many of us. We'll find our path and it will get easier in time. There will be bumps and missteps, but it's all part of life. Just know that no matter what, we will be there for you and nothing you could do or say will ever make us leave."

"We will figure it out somehow, right? Just try to tell me when you need time, please?"

"No promises," he said. Pulling her into his arms, he crushed her close, yet didn't hurt her. "You are mine, Goldie. I will try my damndest to ensure you are always happy, safe, and know you're loved. But I can't always promise to keep you in the loop with my emotional rollercoaster."

"Good." She leaned into him, wrapping her arms tighter around him and holding on with all she had in her. "I love you, Mahon, and I'm never letting you go. If you make me unhappy I will tell you, and then you have to make it right. That only seems fair?"

“Uh...sure?” it came out like a question. Fitting really, given his wary expression. “But I’m not attempting to make you unhappy at any time. It’s just easier if you’re happy and pleased all the time. Then I don’t have to figure out how to get out of the hole I’ve dug.”

“That is likely a very good thing because I have a feeling its going to be Tor and Ark who are going to make me want to brain them from time to time, huh?” Reaching out, Goldie touched her fingers to Mahon’s lips. “Just talk to me. Anytime. Anywhere. Just talk to me.”

Nodding, he leaned in to kiss her. “I will. I promise. And if you feel the need to brain those two, do it while I’m not around. I might try to stop you and get myself in trouble. Which would be very bad.”

Her laughter filled the room. “Right. I will keep that in mind. However, if it’s the heat of the moment I cannot make any promises at all. I mean it. I will try to not smack them when you are around, but you know me.”

“I’m beginning to,” he said quietly. With a smile, he kissed her again. “Get dressed. We need to get downstairs soon. Dinner will be ready in the next hour, and with this horde, it’s first come, first served on best choices of meat.”

“Oh we both know Ark and Torben will save me food.” Grinning, Goldie added, “You maybe not so much, but me, totally. They would never let me go hungry and you know it.”

“True enough,” he nodded. He moved to his clothing and began to pull it back on. “Which means I damn well need to get down there and be first in line.” Mahon grinned at her, “And, while I love you, I plan on cutting in front of you.”

Goldie laughed at that and shook her head. “Oh it’s okay. I don’t mind if you cut in front of me because that means I can pat your perfect ass, my dear one. I happen to love being behind.”

“No groping in the food line,” he said, pointing at her. “I could drop my food and that would just cause a riot. If you wanted to grope me later, I wouldn’t be opposed just not when food is involved.”

“That’s what you think. I’m so going to grope you, and you aren’t going to drop your food or you might not get to eat. Now where would the fun be in that? Besides, have you seen the mountain of food that has been cooked? I mean for real?”

“Most of those down there are bears, Goldie. We eat a lot,” he pointed out. Stuffing his feet into his runners, he looked up at her. “So let’s get

moving. Those folks down there will eat us out of every bit of food there is.”

“Oh my. Do you guys have food directly trucked to your home? Is there hidden freezers somewhere I don’t know about?” she teased him happily. “And I don’t need shoes. I’m home and I hate wearing shoes.” She pulled her hair back again and nodded. “But I’m ready if you are.”

“We brought in extra for the weekend. We always have to. That is a lot of stomachs to fill. Not just tonight, but all day tomorrow and Sunday. Thankfully, then they will all leave. Well, except for Josie but she’s small and doesn’t eat much.”

“Oh God, what? You, oh God.” Goldie felt a little ill. “You mean we are going to be sharing a bed with all of your parents here? I don’t know if I will survive this. Are you sure this room is soundproof?”

“They know we’re mated, Goldie. They knew it the moment they saw you. Like all of our kind, they can see the mating marks on your neck. They know well and good we’ll be sleeping together tonight and every night hereafter. Or,” he smirked, “rather the nights you let us into your bed after pissing you off.”

She snorted and said, “I might as well because the only thing I would be doing if I made you leave my bed would be going to wherever it is you guys went. I can’t sleep without my bears. You guys have went and ruined me for all time. Damn it.”

Laughing, he scooped her up and hugged her to him. “Well, I’m very glad you think so. Makes things a little easier, and tells me I can probably get away with a few things before pushing you too far.” Setting her down on her feet, he kissed her gently.

“Yeah, more than likely you can get away with a hell of a lot. Just be ready for me to grumble and complain.” Goldie wrapped her arm around him and then tickled him. When he pulled back, she shot out of his arms and started to race for the stairs, and for food.

“Hey!” he yelled from behind her. Seconds later his loud footfalls were on her ass and getting closer. On the staircase, he shot right past her, cheating! He was riding the railing down, not fair! Then, oh he’d pay, he stuck his tongue out at her as he hit the floor and raced for the kitchen door out onto the deck.

Goldie jumped onto Mahon’s back and laughed. Wrapping her legs and arms around him, she squeezed. “No cheating.” So she had cheated by

taking off before him, but he was so much taller than her, she had to have a fighting chance. At least that was what she was telling herself as she rode on his back.

Chuckling, his hands came up to her legs and hitched her higher. “Says the woman who tore off without a word after tickling me to throw me off balance. I think we need to examine your definition of cheating, darling.”

“Nope, your legs are longer.” She gave him another squeeze and giggled. Her cheek brushed against his, “Besides, you love having me wrapped around you. Admit it,” her voice was soft, the words barely escaping in a breath against his ear.

“I prefer you to be na...ah.” He coughed, and came to a dead stop, rocking slightly on his feet. There right before him was Josie, grinning and holding up her arms.

“My turn, Uncle Mahon,” she said, wiggling her fingers.

“You’ll have to talk to Aunt Goldie. I did promise her a ride after all,” he said.

Josie’s big eyes turned to meet Goldie’s. And like the little diva she was, she assessed the situation. Out went the lower lip, quivering right on cue and the eyes got wet.

Goldie grinned and bit Mahon’s earlobe lightly. “But of course you can have a ride, Josie. Uncle Mahon was just saying he wasn’t that hungry at all, and I’m sure he would be willing to wait for food. Wouldn’t you?” she teased the bear, the hungry bear, happily.

Mahon growled at her and smacked her ass. Leaning down, he let her go, “Aunt Goldie is going to go and save me a plate and protect it with her lovely little life, especially if she doesn’t want to be the one sleeping in your room tonight while you have a sleepover in the fort with us.”

“What if I go and get your food, Uncle Mahon, then we can all have a sleepover in the fort?” Josie said with a huge grin. Not waiting for an answer, she raced off, screaming for her father.

Goldie laughed and shook her head. “Looks like you are going to be sleeping with Josie in a fort. Too bad really. You see, I just got this new negligee and I was going to wear it tonight. Oh well, maybe Ark or Torben will want to come and tear it off me.”

“You really weren’t paying attention to that conversation were you?” he smirked. “We’re all sleeping in the fort, babe. You, me, Torben, and Ark. So you’d better find something rated G to wear to bed tonight. It will be a long,

long,” he chuckled, “long night.” Laughing, he headed for the door whistling under his breath.

“Oh God, I’m going to kill that man,” Goldie mumbled and rubbed her temples. If she didn’t, Ark or Tor would, and he knew it too. “Yeah, long night. Goodie.” Forts. She couldn’t recall ever building a fort to sleep in, ever.

“No you’re not,” he called over his shoulder. Josie was back with a plate, her dad with another. “Excellent selection, Miss Josie. We’ll set them over here for Auntie Goldie to keep an eye on and defend from the vultures.”

“They’re bears, Uncle M,” the little girl said.

“This is true, and I obviously need to explain that comment.” Shaking his head, he set the plates on a table to one side. Scooping her up, he flipped her around, obviously in a move well practiced, until she was hanging onto his back.

Goldie watched them and shook her head. Grinning, she took a seat and simply watched him with Josie, smiled when Ark or Tor would join in their escapades. It suddenly hit her—home. She was a part of a family. A real family one that loved each other like crazy and they would bend over backwards and sideways for each other. It was a stunning realization, one that honestly left her a bit lightheaded.

Chapter Nine

“You okay?” Laurie, Josie’s mother and Ark’s sister, sat down next to her. “You look a little pale, Goldie. Did you need me to grab the guys? Can I get you a drink?” she offered. Reaching out, she touched Goldie’s hand, “Goldie?”

Goldie shook her head and smiled, “No, nothing is wrong. I just realized not only did I get three amazing men for my own, but I got a family as well. Men that I love like there is no tomorrow and love me right back just as fiercely. I’ve never really had a family before, and this just floors me.”

“Well, you’ll likely want to return us soon enough.” She leaned back and laughed. “We’re a lot to handle on the best of days. Wait until the alcohol starts rolling. It only goes downhill from there. By the time we leave Sunday night, you’ll be more than glad to see our asses as we depart.”

Goldie shook her head. “I don’t think so. Yes, it will be nice to have quiet again, but this is family. I never really understood what that meant until just this moment. You have no idea how much this means to me. How good this is for me. I love it.”

“Well I’m glad,” Laurie said as her husband sauntered past with a plate full of desserts. “Oh no you don’t, mister,” she scrambled up and darted after her husband. “You’re not supposed to have that. You heard the doctor.”

Chuckling, Arkadios collapsed into the seat his sister had just vacated. “Looks like Martin’s in shit again, poor guy,” he said. Reaching over, he picked up her hand, “How you doing, Goldie? Surviving the masses are we?”

“I am.” She leaned into him and sighed happily. “You are marvelous, and so is your family.” Her head lay on his shoulder and she smiled. “And I’m just realizing I have a family now. It’s a stunning realization to me that I am not alone any longer. I like that feeling, a lot.”

“You’re just now figuring it out?” he asked, his voice up an octave from normal. “Woman, what are we, chopped liver? Geez,” he muttered some other things, mostly under his breath. “I don’t know about you, Goldie,” he said, pressing a kiss to her hair.

“You guys are amazing. I love the three of you like crazy, but it wasn’t until I met your parents and siblings that I realized I’m a part of a true

family. Ark, you have no idea how happy this makes me. How I just don't have words to tell you how much I love it and how it affects me."

He moved slightly, then a hand came up to tip her face up a bit. He stared into her eyes for a time before he nodded. "I get it, Goldie," he said. Pressing a kiss to her lips, he settled back in his seat. Hugging her tightly, he chuckled, "If you want to claim any of them as yours permanently, well, I think it can be arranged."

"I would like that. I know I've already claimed my three bears for mine for the rest of time. I think I want your families as well. Can we make that happen? If so, how?" Goldie nuzzled up closer to him, sighing and simply enjoying being close to her big bear, Arkadios.

"We'll give them to you," Torben said. He walked up and collapsed at her feet, leaning back on his hands. "Free of charge. Hell, we'll even pay you if that's what is needed," he grinned up at her.

"Except Josie," Ark told her. "That one we're keeping as ours too. You can borrow her from time to time if you wish, but she's too adorable to give up fully."

Goldie laughed and nodded, "She really is, isn't she? She's such a little sweetheart and has you all wrapped so tightly around her little fingers that you would all do anything for her. One day you guys are going to make amazing fathers."

"We'll definitely try, love, but who knows until it happens." Torben grinned, "I'm more interested in the fun part of trying to make babies. That's where the true joy is," he chuckled. "Not that we need to have kids tomorrow or anything. Eventually might be nice though."

"Not right now. I'm far too selfish to want to give up our life that we have now for anything, honey. I think in a few years maybe but right now, I think we should practice often. A lot." Winking, she looked to Mahon and added, "We could try tonight, but someone had to go and promise a fort house."

"We know," Ark said with a chuckle. "Don't worry about it. With all this running around, she'll be passed out by nine at the latest. We'll do the fort in the living room, and once she's asleep, we'll be able to go to bed. She'll never know the difference. We do it all the time."

"You do?" Goldie laughed and shook her head. "Oh dear God. That is too funny. Well I am so very down with that. I happen really to love the idea

we will be able to sleep in our bed. We will just have to remember to put clothes on sometime during the night.”

“She doesn’t come into the master bedroom,” Mahon said, coming over to collapse in a seat. Josie settled happily on his lap with a rib to chew on. “Tell Aunt Goldie why you don’t come into the master bedroom doll.”

“Boys are icky,” Josie said with a grin, barbecue sauce smeared on her cheeks.

“Damned straight,” Arkadios said with a laugh. “And how long will you feel that way doll?”

“Until I’m old and gray,” Josie said with a giggle.

“And why will it be that long?” Torben asked. This was clearly a rehearsed routine.

“Because my daddy and uncles will gut any boy who gets any ideas about me in his head.” She held out the now naked rib bone, “More please.”

Goldie laughed and shook her head. “Oh God you are too funny. Well, guys, someone needs to get the girl some more food. Don’t you see she’s a growing little bear that needs lots of food and energy?”

Mahon took the stripped down bone, inspected it, and dropped it on his plate. Lifting a rib from it, he handed it to her, “Clean it just like the other, and we’ll get you a plate. T, you want to hook the little one up?”

“Can do. Josie, juice box work for you?” She gave him a grin and nodded. “I’ll also return with a large washcloth.” Chuckling, he got up and headed toward the food.

Goldie watched them and shook her head, “Josie girl, you have these boys well trained. I love it.” She leaned over and kissed the girl’s cheek. “Just remember how you did it when you meet your mate one day in the very far future.”

“I will, Aunt Goldie.” The little girl looked her way and winked.

“This one,” Mahon touched Josie’s hair, “is much too smart for her own good, her parents, and those of us she suckers in with just a smile. I have a feeling that whomever her mate might one day be, will be wrapped around her finger right quick.”

Goldie winked at Josie and nodded, “Then you are doing something right. Keep it up, little one.” She then leaned back into Ark’s arms and sighed happily. “This is very nice. How often do you have a big get together like this?”

“Every six months,” Ark said quietly. “Any more than that and we’d need to get second or third jobs to pay for it all. We weren’t kidding earlier. By the time this lot leaves on Sunday night, we’ll need to do shopping come Monday. That is why our schedule is so light next week. Well that and the moppet there is staying with us for the week. One of us has to be with her the entire time.”

“Otherwise she tries to take the house and the office apart bolt by bolt,” Torben put in as he handed a plate and a wet cloth to Mahon for Josie.

Goldie laughed, “You are too funny.” She looked to Josie and said, “So means we will have girl time, right? I will take the uncles’ credit cards and we will go shopping and to dinner and all the other fun stuff.”

“We may need that second job after all,” Mahon said. Picking up the cloth, he wiped off some of the sauce coating Josie. Passing her the plate, he set her on her feet. “Sit down with Uncle Torben and eat, sweet pea. I’m starving as well and need to eat.”

“You guys need to get something to eat.” Goldie wasn’t all that hungry. She was just simply happy to be there where she was. “And before you say anything, yes I feel fine. I will eat a little later. Right now, I’m just happy to be where I am.”

“I already ate. I’ll grab something else later,” Ark said. “But I got in there fast and got some good grub.”

Mahon rolled his eyes as he picked up his plate. “Lucky for me, Miss Josie went in and got me a bunch of the good stuff.” Leaning forward, he held up his hand to let the little girl high-five him before sitting back to continue eating her food.

Goldie laughed, “Only because you bribed the poor girl.” She looked to Torben, “You really should go and get some food, babe. Get some good stuff before it’s all gone.” Her fingers moved so her and Ark’s hands were clasped tightly together, palm-to-palm, and smiled. This was what happiness was.

“I was on the grill, I tasted as I went,” he grinned up at her. “Plus, I was snacking on all the other items as we made them today. I’ll likely be hungry later, but right now, if I eat one more thing I may hurl.”

“Well good. That only means I get you guys all to myself, and Josie as well, for a time.” Goldie snuggled up and reached out to touch the curls on the little girl’s head. “I’m a very happy, very lucky woman.”

Josie swatted at her hand. Arkadios chuckled. "Don't interrupt her while she's eating. She can get quite cranky when she's focused," he said next to Goldie's ear. His hand was slipping higher over her belly, his thumb just brushing the underside of her breast. Sneaky bear.

Goldie turned her face up to Arkadios and smiled. "Then I think you should distract me for a moment or three," she teased and licked her lips, her eyes focused on his lips. Dear lord she had just had a brief interlude with one of her bears, and here she was already wet again for another.

"Oh, I will gladly distract you for however long you require." A smile was curling his lips before they touched hers. Light contact was made, too light, as he brushed his lips to hers slowly. Sneaky bear was playing with her, his tongue slipping out to tease hers, then shying away.

"Good." Goldie grinned happily. "I happen to really love the way you distract me too," she whispered happily and nipped his lip with her teeth. "You are forever mine. Always," she whispered.

"Right back at you, little mate," he smiled against her lips. Kissing her harder, he scraped his teeth to her lower lip. "You are one sexy woman," he said. He was moving his lips in a lazy manner over her cheek.

"I'm very happy you think so, my big sexy bear, but I am not so sure this is a conversation to have with little ears so close." Granted, Josie was so into her meal that she likely could give a damn what they were discussing.

"Josie's cool, she knows not to mention such things. Trust me," Arkadios shuddered. "After the last 'you'll never guess what daddy did to mommy' conversation, we ensured that never happened again. Some things I do not *ever* need to know about my sister's sex life. Like all of it or any of it."

"Oh, Ark." Goldie laughed. She couldn't seem to help herself at all. "I can so see that one happening too." She began to grin and shook her head, "Remind me to lock our doors, double lock them please. We need to ensure she never walks in on us. Okay?"

"She won't," he said quietly. Stroking his thumb over the curve of her breast, Ark kissed her neck. "Why do you think we have the top and bottom bolts on the bedroom doors? Not to keep anyone in, it's to keep sneaky little lock-picking bears out."

"Thank God." Goldie moved in closer to Ark and grinned. Licking her lips, she whispered, "How about you and I go and get something to eat?"

And maybe snuggle up in a closet or something somewhere.”

Smiling, he nodded and got to his feet. Holding out a hand to her, he tugged her up. “We’ll be back in a few, or so,” he told Torben and Mahon. Torben nodded as he wiped at the ever-spreading mess on Josie’s face. Mahon waved a hand, sort of, he may have been swatting at a bug actually. Ark gave her hand a little tug and pulled her toward the house.”

Goldie laughed, and as soon as they were in Arkadios’s office, she threw herself into his arms and began to kiss him. Greedily she moved her mouth over his. When she parted from him, she licked her lips. “Can we get naked in here?” she asked before she tried to strip.

“Like I’m going to say no when you’re stripping.” He gave a chuckle and turned to lock the door. He even shoved a chair under the doorknob. Then he faced her and pulled his shirt off over his head. He wasn’t wearing shoes so when he got rid of the old, ratty jeans, he was naked and more than ready to go from the looks of things.

Goldie quickly strip down, and she moved toward him. Her hand closed around his already hard cock, and she squeezed, letting her hand slide down his cock and then back up again. “God, I love how hard you are.”

“I’m always hard for you. I think of you, am around you, or breathe in your scent and I’m rock fucking hard.” His hands landed on her ass. In the next moment, she found herself sitting on the desk with him between her legs.

“Good. I’m glad, because you look at me and I am so fucking wet I can’t hardly stand it. And then when you growl...I swear that growl gets me every single time.” There was just something about when Arkadios growled that sent every single nerve ending and pleasure sensor in her body into overdrive.

Laughing softly, he pressed a kiss to her lips. “Well then, I will have to growl a little more just to keep you nicely primed all the time. I like knowing you are wet and wanting. That anytime we want, we could come together.”

“Oh hell yes. However, I think that at least one of the offices needs to have walls and lockable doors. Soundproofing would be good too,” she said with a smile. “So the whole office doesn’t know what we are doing.”

“We can arrange that,” he grinned. “We’ll have to do the work on the weekends and after hours but it is doable. We’ve all worked construction. We all stay hands on, so it shouldn’t take more than a couple of solid shifts.

We'll just keep the office locked and shut down in the meantime. Tell them there was a leak or something that we're fixing."

"Now see? I love how you think!" Goldie praised him and lifted her face, "Now, how about you join me up on this rather large desk, and we come together. See if you can make me scream as well," she teased him. Tor and Mahon did it to her as well but something about Arkadios took it to another level.

"I know I can make you scream. Quite loudly as I recall," he smiled at her. Laying her back on the desk, he caught her hands and lifted them over her head. "Hold on tight, Goldie, let's see how quickly I can make you scream for me."

Goldie's fingers wrapped around the edge of the desk and she held on. Looking down her body at him, she licked her lips. "Then I think that you should make me do just that." Evidently, she did have a bit of an exhibitionist in her.

"They won't hear you, even if you reach octaves only animals can hear. This house is solid," he smiled at her. Reaching out, he laid a hand on her chest and slowly slid it between her breasts, down over her belly, to her pussy, his fingers slipping between her folds. He rubbed through her moisture, his eyes on hers, "You are very, very wet."

"Good," she moaned. "And yes, my Arkadios, I am very, very wet. I seem to always be wet for you," she moaned. "Now do something about it."

"You are our mate. You are feeling the bond with us. It will even out in time and become less distressing to you, but the need will always be there, ready, waiting, and wanting. For now though," he gripped her hips and thrust into her hard. Her moan was drowned out by his growl of pleasure. "For now though, I will ensure you are well tended to."

"Good," she said with another moan that matched his. "I love how you take care of me, Ark. How it feels when we come together." Another sob of pure pleasure escaped her and she pushed back against him once more.

"It is ever my pleasure to take care of you," he was grinning at her. His cock slid in and out with purpose, hitting her deep and teasing every part of her pussy. "The fact that you're naked is only a bonus. That I'm making love to you is a gift from the God."

"I couldn't agree more." She reached out her hand to him and pulled him closer. "I need you," she whispered softly. "I have to have you moving inside of me now. So quit teasing me."

“I like to tease you,” he smiled down at her. Pressing a kiss to her lips, he thrust harder. His hold on her hips was keeping her from sliding off the desk. “I love the look on your face and the way you growl as I tease you.”

“Yes I do growl a lot, don’t I? I love to growl at you and you know you love it too. Admit it,” she demanded as she moved up and under him. A shudder released from her. A shiver of pure and intense delight. “I adore everything about you, Goldie,” he said quietly. “But the growl is fucking sexy. It makes me hot, bothered, and hard as a rock in under a second. You growling just makes me want to throw you down and fuck you until you don’t know your own name.”

That had her grinning, and just for giggles, she growled. Then moaned when he thrust harder and deeper into her body. She found herself crying out, “God, yes!”

“Growl for me, baby, and I’ll let you come. Give me a big old growl and impress me,” he demanded. One of his hands slid over her belly, his thumb playing with her curls. He was still pushing deep, but not as quickly as before, drawing it all out.

Her hands curled into fists and she pressed back against him time and again. Finally, though, she couldn’t take it. Using every trick her men had given her, she let out a growl, well more of scream actually.

Giving her a growl back, Arkadios pressed his thumb to her clit as he slammed into her. Over and over, he drove his cock through her spasming sheath. His thumb relentlessly rubbing and scraping over the tight nub as he drove her to the edge.

Goldie screamed repeatedly, the pure pleasure she felt from having him inside of her as he made her entire being feel right once again. This was what she would always need. Him.

His weight came down over her as his seed shot into her body. His breathing was harsh, puffing against her shoulder. With a groan, he pushed up onto his elbows, “Fuck, woman. You’re going to kill me one of these days.”

Goldie could only smile. Finally, when she was able to speak, she said, “And what a way to go. I can’t believe how much pleasure there is in making love with you.”

Chuckling, he brushed a kiss to her chin. “Well good news is, no one came running, which means the soundproofing actually works. Either that,

or Torben turned up the music to drown you out.” Grinning, he pushed up further and stared down at her. “I love you, Goldie,” he said softly.

Goldie smiled, “I love you too, Ark. I’m so very happy your home is the one I stumbled into. You make me smile. You bring me such happiness and joy I don’t know how I called what I did before, living. This, what we have now is truly living.”

“It’s a definite improvement over my life too,” he said. “I was missing out on something important. Something only you could bring to us all, Goldie. Your love.” Smiling, he slid free of her and then pulled her to sit upright. “We should clean up and then go and get some food.”

“Good. And yes, food. Food sounds wonderful right now. Do you think any ribs are left? They looked very yummy indeed. Now I have a full and raging appetite, I think I might be able to keep up with the little cub on her food eating ways.”

Chuckling, he shrugged, “We bought enough, nearly three oinkers worth, so hopefully there is still some left. If not, we can break out the emergency rations. The ones we stashed away before everyone arrived,” he explained when she just stared at him.

“Oh God, seriously?” Goldie began to laugh then. She couldn’t help herself. “You guys certainly do think and plan ahead, don’t you?”

“Just ensuring our mate is taken care of,” he said. Pulling on his jeans, he grabbed up his shirt. Shrugging into it, he did up the buttons on his fly. “Plus we know these people. They are fiends when it comes to free food. Absolute fiends.”

Goldie took two minutes to get dressed again, using her panties to clean herself up before sliding into her jeans without them. Shoving the underwear into her pocket she said, “We need to make sure to get me upstairs so I can put these in the hamper. So don’t want to be carrying them around all day. So help remind me?”

“Run up once we step out. You can rejoin me and we’ll grab beers, and then go outside to get some food. Everyone should already be through first and second helpings. Which means they will have slowed down. More than likely, they have started a game out there of some sort to burn off some calories. We can sit and watch and offer up cold ones when they take a break.”

“Sounds like a plan. I will see you in like a minute and a half, since I know I can slide down the banister,” Goldie said with a grin. “Go get me a

plate too please?" she asked happily. "And what kind of game would they have started?" She loved games, sometimes. Depending on how involved it was.

"Well either football, full contact of course, or rugby," he grinned at her. Laughing when she was stuck for something to say, he leaned in to kiss her. "I'll be in the kitchen when you come down. I need to load up a bin with ice and beers. Don't be long, and be careful on the rail. It's highly polished so there is no stopping once you get moving."

"Oh my," she said with a grin and then took off. She couldn't wait to slide down the banister and he knew it from the look of pure joy on her face when he said how polished the railing was. Racing upstairs, she tossed her panties into the dirty clothes, washed her hands and face, and then raced back down the stairs, using the banister for maximum speed.

At the loud bang, Arkadios came racing out, only slowing as she laughed nearly hysterically. "Good fucking God, woman! I warned you," he moved to her and shook his head. "Goldie, do not scare me like that. I nearly choked on my heart it jumped up so far."

On the floor where she dumped after her race down the banister, she looked up at him with a grin. "It was a great deal of fun though. I think however, we should put pillows or something right there." Giving him her hand, she let him pull her to her feet. "I might have a bruise for you to kiss later," she teased.

"I'll gladly kiss whatever you want." Hauling her up, he shook his head again. "But you really need to be more careful, Goldie. I'm serious. I thought you'd hurt yourself." He pulled her into his arms and held her loosely. "I don't know what I would do if you were ever hurt, love."

"I'm fine. Although, maybe later you can kiss the boo-boo on my backside?" she whispered softly and wrapped her arms around him to pull him closer. "I love you, Ark. If it bothers you, I won't do it again. I promise."

"It just scared the hell out of me," he said gruffly. "You can do it again if you want. Just remember to watch your speed down it. Or plan your landing better. You land on your ass again and I may have to paddle you. Hard."

"Oh I might have to do it anyway just to get a spanking." Shrugging, she added, "And I have no idea what in the world to do in order to slow my

descent. Maybe I should get some pointers from the others? Or you? Do you slide down this thing ever?"

"Not since we put the last three coats of lacquer on it. Ask Mahon how he manages not to die every time he comes down. He rides it more than Torben or I ever did." He drew back and touched her cheek lightly. "You sure you're okay?"

"I'm perfectly fine." Goldie stepped in closer to Arkadios and grinned, "I wouldn't mind one small bit, however, if you would want to take me and strip me to search every inch of my skin. Then again it would mean we would miss our meal and most of the night too, but I'm game if you are."

"I would love to, darling, but I am hungry. And you need to eat too, Goldie. Don't want you wearing down tonight when we get you to ourselves again. We have plans for you," he smiled suggestively. "Lots and lots of plans. All of them ending with you begging and screaming."

"Oh, I love your plans when they begin and end like that. I look forward to each and every single one of your plans." When Arkadios made plans, they always involved a great deal of pleasure, and many, many orgasms.

"I thought you might enjoy them, love," he chuckled. Pressing a kiss to her lips, he drew back. "Let's go and get food. I have the beer ready and the gang is out there beating on one another. Apparently, they're into rugby right now. Hopefully the lads are holding their own. I'd hate to have to beat on my own brother-in-law just to keep the trophy in the house."

"Sounds good to me." She looked up at him and grinned, "What? What trophy in the house? Please tell me you guys didn't have a trophy made just for these times when your family comes by? Who do you guys play against anyway?"

"Of course we had a trophy made. We're a very competitive group of bears," he chuckled. "All the guys play, and usually most of the women too. Depends on how mean they are feeling. Mahon's parents never do though. They usually sit with Josie and play cheerleaders. Either that, or tell us we need to find something less violent to do during our dinners."

"Oh lordy," she said with a shrug. "Well, good thing I will have company while I'm playing cheerleader with Josie then, huh? And as long as there is no bloodshed, I guess it's all good, right? There isn't, is there?" she asked with a frown. "Oh crap there is, isn't there?"

"It's rugby," he laughed. Grabbing her up, he kissed her and spun her around. "It's one of the last legal blood sports out there. And it's good to

kill, kill, kill.” Growling, he nibbled on her neck as he tickled her gently.

“Oh dear God.” Goldie leaned her head to the side and moaned though. “Keep doing that and the only bloodshed will be when Tor and Mahon come and find us both naked, and getting busy instead of you helping them with whatever it is you need to do.”

“Win, win, win,” he chuckled, squeezing her. Nipping her neck, he squeezed her close. “Come on, darling. We need to eat before I help the lads keep the trophy where it rightfully belongs.”

“Yes, food does sound good, especially since some bears helped work me into a hell of an appetite.” Goldie moved from him and grabbed his hand.

Letting her loose, he smacked her ass and grinned when she shot him a glare. “You deserved that, woman.” He walked to the counter and lifted the large tub of ice and beer. “Can you get the door for me, Goldie?”

“You bet your sweet ass I can.” She moved to the door and opened it. When he walked out in front of her, she couldn’t stop herself from swatting his too delicious ass. When he looked back at her, she grinned, “Hey, I was only showing you how much I love it.”

“Uh-huh,” he chuckled. Shaking his head, he kept moving another two steps and then stopped dead. The tub fell with a crash as he staggered. The next moment he dropped to his knees, his breath whooshing out. Torben was yelling at her to get down, Mahon had Josie in his arms and was rushing the women behind one of the sheds. The men were all racing for cover, and Torben was coming right for her.

Goldie couldn’t believe what was happening. Hell, she didn’t know what was happening. All she knew was Arkadios dropped to the ground like a dead weight and there seemed to be chaos surrounding them. When Torben wrapped his arms around her and tumbled them into the house, she wiggled, “Ark, we have to get to him!” A second later she added, “What the hell is happening?!”

“He’s been shot,” Torben said, rolling her out of the line of the windows. “No!” he grabbed her when she tried to break free. “I’ll get him but you need to stay here, stay safe, Goldie. If anything happens to you, we’ll lose him for sure. Stay put!” A definite order and one, the look on his face said, he would enforce by whatever means necessary.

Goldie nodded with tears streaming down her face she whispered, “Please. Please go and get him. Save him for us please?” she asked with a

sob. She moved back to the wall and watched Torben going for Arkadios. When he was close to her, she reached out and grabbed one of the dishtowels to press it against his wound. "Why isn't he healing?" she demanded.

"Because the bullet is still in his chest," Torben said. "Fuck, we need Laurie in here. She's a doctor. She can get it out and then he can start to heal. Touch him, talk to him. Keep him grounded with us, Goldie. I need to find his sister, and then I need to figure out who the hell was shooting at us."

Goldie nodded and leaned over Arkadios. "Ark, come on, baby, open your eyes. Look at me, honey. You've been hurt, and we are trying to figure out how to get Laurie in here so she can pull the bullet from your chest. Don't move. I mean it. Don't move an inch until she gets it out and you can shift to heal. Okay?"

Torben was peering around the wall, "I see Laurie. Stay where you are, Goldie. I hopefully won't be long." Smiling at her, he raced out in the yard before she could say anything. What felt like an hour later, but was likely only minutes, he was back with Laurie in tow. "Deal with your brother, I'll get the others," he said to the woman before he disappeared again.

Goldie looked up at Laurie, "What do you need me to do? I put pressure on the wound, it's honestly the only I knew to do. I didn't want to have him losing more blood than he should, or had already, or whatever. Please save him," she begged.

"I fully plan to, no way is he getting out of watching his niece for a week," she said. The words were light but the terror was stark on her face. She was scared too. "Alright, alright," she looked around before walking in a crouch to the island. She grabbed one of the knives from the block, and then came back. "I need to get the bullet out so he can shift and heal. Until it's out, he'll resist shifting, but it will get harder with each moment we wait. Reach into the fridge and get some water. Wash off as much blood from his chest as you can. I need to see what I'm doing."

Goldie nodded and moved to do Laurie's bidding. Cleaning off his chest as best she could, she grabbed a couple more hand towels from the drawer and nodded. "Okay, you tell me what you need me to do and I will do it. I have two more bottles of water and some clean towels. Let's get it out of him so he can shift and heal."

“We will,” she was looking around again. “I need tweezers or something. Hell, tongs would do about now,” she muttered. “In the drawer there,” she pointed over Goldie’s shoulder. “Pull it out and we will dig through. Hopefully they have something that will work. I’d really rather not use my bare fingers, but if I have to, I will.”

Goldie reached over her head and dug through the drawer to find tongs. “Where is everyone else?” she muttered and passed them off. “Josie, she’s okay, right?” she asked with horror dripping from her voice. “I saw Mahon had her, and he wouldn’t let anything happen to her, but why are they not in the house yet? Who the hell is shooting at us?”

“Jos is fine, Mahon will look after her. They are likely coming in through the basement. Given where most of them headed for cover, it’s the most logical place to enter the house. Plus, it’s more secure down there. As to the rest, I have no idea,” she whispered. Placing her hand on her brother’s chest, Laurie took a slow breath. “I’m going to make an incision to enlarge the hole, and hopefully find the bullet right off. If not, this is going to get messy fast. When I make the cut, I need you to press down and push out with your hands, make the opening as big as you can, but keep your fingers out of my way.”

“Can do,” Goldie said and looked down at Ark’s pale face. “Just do this quickly so he can shift, and hopefully heal far faster than he would as a human. This is killing me.” Seeing Arkadios down like that was tearing her apart. He was larger than life, and he was her love. She loved Torben and Mahon as well, but Ark was special.

Nodding, Laurie flexed her fingers, lifted the knife, and let out a breath. “Here we go.” She sliced quickly, and laid the blade down on Arkadios’s stomach. Goldie put her hands in place and did as she’d been told. Laurie grabbed a bottle of water and poured it into the wound. “Shit,” she muttered, not even reaching for the tongs. Reaching into the wound with her fingers, she made a face of concentration. It was long, tense moments before she pulled her hand out with a bullet in her fingers. Dumping the rest of the water into the wound, Laurie pushed her hands away. Leaning over her brother, she slapped his cheek, “Shift, Ark, let the bear out and heal.”

Goldie cupped Ark’s face, “Shift for me, Ark. Come on. Let my bear out so you can heal. I need you to shift, babe. Please, for me,” she all but begged him. “Come on, shift, Ark.”

His lashes fluttered and then his lids opened slowly. "Goldie," his voice was so soft she had to strain to hear the single word. "Love you," he murmured. A second later, he began to shift, his face twisting in pain, and Laurie was pulling her back out of the way.

Goldie held Arkadios's head, and when a bear head was in her lap she stroked her bloody hands over his fur. "I love you too, Arkadios." To Laurie she asked, "What's happening? Did they get everyone inside? Or stop the shooter? Anything?"

"I don't know," Laurie said quietly. Moving toward the doors carefully, she looked out and shook her head. "I can't see anyone, so I'm guessing they're inside. I'd go look, but there's too many damned windows. This is one of the few rooms with walls to keep us hidden."

"Then stay here. Mahon and Torben will come to us when it's safe," Goldie said with utmost confidence and stroked her hands over her bear's fur. "Don't move, Ark. You are hurt and there are bad people out there," she told the massive bear, hoping he would understand. "He does understand me in this form, right?"

"He does, though he's likely unconscious. At least that's my guess given how deep his breathing is. But yes, they will always be able to hear you, and understand you in their bear forms unless they are in full rage that is. In other words," Laurie shuffled back over and sat next to her brother, "if someone tries to harm you, and my brothers lose it enough to shift forms, they will be in a killing rage and not much you say will get through to them then."

"They would never hurt me," Goldie said without hesitation or fear. "No matter what else happened in the world, I know those men would never hurt me. They would move mountains for me, and I for them." She stroked her hands over Ark's fur and simply kept trying to assure herself that he really was okay, he really was going to be fine.

"Yeah, but trust me, first time it happens, you'll wet yourself a little." Laurie shook her head and chewed on her lip. "I have my own protective streak. I'm a mother after all. But the males of the species seem to take it to a whole new level. You seem to have them all handled rather well if I do have to say, and so quickly too."

"It's because I've needed them all my life, and they me. We understand each other very well. We all know without the four of us there is loneliness

and sadness and that's simply unacceptable. I love these men with all that I am."

"That's good," she nodded. "It's very good because the first time you want to murder them, and trust me, you will, the love you feel is the only thing to keep you from belting them, hard. It won't happen often, but every now and again they seem to revert to some prehistoric point in their evolution and get these hair-brained ideas."

"Right, I will keep it in mind. No hitting them because they likely would break my fist with their too hard heads," she muttered. "And yes, I already have that figured out. These men are bull-headed to the nth degree." She looked around anxiously. "Mahon had Josie. She's all right. She must be with your husband as well, or I have a feeling she would be screaming bloody murder."

"She's fine. They'll keep her occupied and safe." Laurie fisted a handful of Arkadios's fur. "I just want to hold her though. Protect my baby myself. Sometimes being a mother seriously sucks. Moments like this are the worst. Everything else, the two a.m. feedings, the poop that goes everywhere, the colic, the teething, all of it is nothing compared to knowing there is danger and you are unable to hold your child."

"I can't even imagine how hard it is right now for you," Goldie whispered softly. Reaching out, she grabbed the woman and gave her a hug. "As soon as they have the bastards dead who dared shoot at us, you can hug the amazing child all you want to. I hope one day to have babies just like her."

"With those three you'll likely be pregnant each and every year," Laurie said. Pulling back, she rubbed her hands on her thighs. "Personally, I can't wait to see Arkadios with a baby in hand. He's amazing with Josie. Always has been. Never once shied from doing diapers and such, no matter how nasty they were. Mahon though, watch out for him. He has one hell of a sensitive gag reflex. Torben's pretty good unless it's a really liquidize poop diaper, then he starts making some interesting noises. Always have a bit of air freshener lying around, they'll need it."

That had Goldie smiling, and she petted Arkadios. "I would love to have a baby, his baby." She leaned in closer and rubbed her cheek to Ark's furry face. "I love this man like crazy," she whispered honestly. "We want children, just not right at the moment. Right now we are having fun just being together."

“Which is totally understandable,” Laurie nodded. “Martin and I waited for five years before we had Josie. With us, it was the fact we’d met and mated young. I’m younger than Ark by six years, so,” she grinned, “gives you a bit of perspective. I was just going into med school. Martin was just starting his business. We knew we had to wait, at least for a time, but eventually, my maternal needs kicked into gear and I told Martin to get busy. The timing wasn’t perfect, but it felt right. Martin was well set in his business, so he took paternal leave to stay with her as much as he could while I finished medical school. Then I took some time off to do the mommy bonding. From there, it’s all history. We made it work for us. It wasn’t conventional by any means, but it worked.”

“That’s all that matters.” Looking up, she looked around as well. “What the ever loving hell is happening? I hate just sitting here. It’s driving me to complete and utter distraction. I need to know what’s happening, because this is utter and complete bullshit.”

“I don’t know,” Laurie said, wiping her hands on her pant legs again. Her eyes went wide and she fumbled in her back pocket. Pulling out her cell, she frowned and put it to her ear. “Hello?” she sounded confused. “Torben! Jesus, what the hell is going on?” Laurie made some uh-huh sounds, clicked her tongue a few times, and then let out a breath. Hanging up, she looked at Goldie, “They’ve cleared the area. No one’s out there. They found the spot where the shot was taken, actually all four shots, but the shooter was long gone. They tracked him for a while, but he must have had a car and they lost the scent. Bad news though, Torben’s pretty sure it was your old boss.”

“That slimy son of a bitch. I will kill him myself!” Goldie grumbled. “I swear to God I will kill him.” She stood and moved to the door, “Why haven’t they come back? Why aren’t they back in the house? Where is Josie?” She was worried for the child as well as Mahon and Torben.

“They were up at the road where the car likely was. They’re heading back now,” Laurie got to her feet. “I’m going to let the others know it’s all clear. You okay to stay with Arkadios?” she asked even as she was inching toward the doorway.

“I’m good. Go and do what you need to do and bring them in safely. And Laurie?” She waited for the woman to turn, “Thank you for saving him. I would be lost without him.”

“He’s my brother, my blood, of course I’d save him. Besides, I’d do the same for anyone else. It’s part of who I am, and goes with the medical license.” Smiling, Laurie ran out of the room, her footsteps could be heard in the hall and then down the stairs.

Arkadios moved his head slightly, his nose brushing the inside of her arm as he let out a heavy breath.

Goldie let her fingers move through his fur, “Hey, honey. You’ve been shot. Try to stay as still as possible. You are going to hurt like crazy, I’m sure, but you need to stay in your bear form for as long as possible, ‘kay?’”

He let out a low growl and then licked his lips, and her arm in the process.

“How’s he doing?” Mahon’s voice reached her, then he appeared around the island and crouched down by her side. “Laurie gave me a run down, but is he conscious?” he asked, touching her hair lightly.

“I think so. He’s growling and licking me, so I’m assuming he’s conscious.” She continued to pet Arkadios. “I have no idea how long he should stay shifted, so I told him to stay that way. I figured you guys would be the ones to ask on this whole healing thing and all that.”

“It’s best he stay in this form for at least a few hours. I’ll check with Laurie later to see how long she figures. She was just sort of shouting out things as she ran past to smother Josie, but he’ll heal about ten times faster in this form than if he was in his normal form. We still heal faster than a human does, about five times faster. Depending on the depth of the wound, where it hit, what it hit, and all that, probably about four or five hours.”

“The bullet thankfully wasn’t that far in his chest. She was able to grab it with her fingers, so was a good thing, right?” She smiled and added, “I’m sure she was anxious to get to Josie.” Goldie leaned her head down and felt the need to cry pressing in on her. She hiccupped once and whispered, “This is my fault. I brought this to your family. I should leave.” Tears traced down her cheeks, but she knew it was what was needed. She brought their families’ into danger, and it was simply not fair to any of them.

The growl from the bear was clearly heard and held a warning. “Make it two votes for not ever fucking happening,” Mahon said. His arm snaked around her shoulders and held her, “You’re not going anywhere, Goldie. Nothing about this is your fault love. You didn’t make him go off his rocker, get a gun, and come after you with it. And he was aiming at you. All four shots. Ark got in front of the one; you managed to duck the second without

even realizing when you reached for Arkadios. And Torben tackled and rolled you beyond the other two shots.”

“Oh God.” Her mouth went totally dry. “He has lost his ever loving mind. How can we stop him? Is there a way we can prove it was him and have him arrested? What do we do in cases like this?” she was rambling, and holding onto both Arkadios and Mahon.

“Unfortunately, we can’t prove he was here. We only know he was because Torben caught his scent and tracked him. No one saw him here shooting at you. Plus we won’t have a bullet wound soon to show proof of intent. But we’re not going to let him get away with it. We’re just going to have to find a way to prove his intent, his motive, and the fact he bought a long range weapon.”

“Well we will do whatever it is we have to do in order to ensure justice is served. He deserves to be strung up and castrated for hurting my Ark, and worse for scaring Josie. I hate to sound bloodthirsty, but there it is. I am just that. I’m so angry right now I could spit nails.”

“Well, no spitting nails, it sounds unhealthy.” Mahon touched her hair gently. “It will be okay, Goldie. We know who it is. Now we just have to prove means, opportunity and motive, and then the police can have him on a silver platter. I do need to call the cops. I’m going to do that, then we’re going to move you and Ark upstairs. You are going to shower off the blood while I clean up down here. Then, we all need to get our stories straight for the cops so we can avoid the whole part about Arkadios being shot.”

"Oh crap. I am a terrible liar," her confession shocked him. "It's part of why clients adore me. I can't lie to save my ass, so we need to think of something so I don't get all frustrated and stuff okay?"

“We will, promise,” he smiled at her. Pressing a kiss to her cheek, he hugged her tight. “Go up and have a shower. Leave your clothes in the sink. I’ll grab them when you’re done. Laurie will be doing the same once she’s smothered Josie for a while. I’ll grab the guys and we’ll get Arkadios up to the bedroom so he can sleep. Go, love, you can cuddle with him after your shower.”

“Thank you.” Goldie gave him a quick kiss and then headed off for the stairs, trusting them to get the big sleeping bear up to the bedroom. How she had no idea, but if anyone could, her men could get it done.

Chapter Ten

Four hours later, the police left. She never even had to see them. Arkadios had shifted back to his human form. His wound was pink healed over and still healing. He was covered in blood all over his chest but hadn't yet had the energy to go and shower. He was just lying there holding her hand, dozing on and off.

Goldie moved so she was closer to Arkadios, and wrapped her arm around his waist so as not to touch his chest. "Please never scare me like that again," she begged softly. "You are everything to me and to see you bleeding..." she was crying now, pressing in close to him as she did so.

"Shh," he breathed out. "I'm fine, love. We're pretty hard to kill, but I don't plan on being shot ever again. It fucking hurts." His other hand came up to brush over her arm lightly. "Please don't cry, Goldie, especially when I can't hold you like I want to."

"I can't help it," she sniffled and moved in closer to him as close as she dared with his injury still looking as pink and angry as it did. "It's my fault you were hurt. It's killing me knowing I am the reason you were hurt and Josie...God, she could have been hurt." And that would have destroyed them all.

"It is not your fault, love," he said again. "The one responsible for it all is the guy who pulled the trigger. No one else, but him. You are as much a victim as everyone else, my darling mate, so stop taking the blame on your gorgeous shoulders or, when I'm fully healed, I'll beat your perky ass."

"And you aren't supposed to threaten me with something you and I both know I utterly and completely love. I mean it. You are supposed to threaten me with something I wouldn't like. I don't know what but something other than a spanking from you, my big bear."

Smiling, he gave her a light squeeze. "Well then, I suppose I will have to think of something. Maybe I should threaten you with a four-hour lecture about the reproductive system as dictated by someone who only speaks in monotone. Or maybe, I should threaten you with no dessert for a month. No!" He grinned suddenly. "No sex for a week, which includes no toys, rubbing, stroking, or using anything in, around, or near the house or office and anywhere in between to give yourself an orgasm."

“No!” Goldie said with wide eyes. “You wouldn’t do that to me, would you? You wouldn’t do that to us, right?” She was utterly insatiable now that she’d found her men. A week without them inside of her, giving them all pleasure, it would be torture!

“Hey, you said to come up with some sort of effective threat. I think I just found it, darling,” Ark chuckled. “And I have to say, it’s damned ingenious now that I think about it. Sneaky, smart and it would teach you to behave yourself. Or are you telling me you wouldn’t learn better after such a punishment as that?”

“But it would punish you guys as well. That’s not very fair.” She hated the punishment he came up with. It was, well it was far too damn good. Damn it. “I don’t want to be the reason we all hurt. You have to come up with something else.”

“Why would it punish us?” His grin said he had a plan. “I said it was a punishment for you not to touch yourself or do anything for sexual release. Never said we couldn’t take care of business. Now did I?” he asked, fluttering his lashes her direction.

“Oh that’s bad.” She narrowed her gaze to him and shrugged. “That’s okay. If you get to take care of business, then so will I,” she huffed. “I mean it. I’m so not going to go a week without my bears. That’s far too long.”

“Nope. If it’s your punishment, then none of that. Those are the rules,” oh he was too smug. “But since I seriously doubt you will ever do anything deserving of punishment, why are you worried? Just remember you are adored, needed, wanted, and loved. But if you forget, oh,” he bared his teeth, “then the punishment is on.”

“Oh, you are rotten,” she muttered and curled back up against him once more. “Now, enough talking. More healing. More resting. Remember you were the one shot. We shouldn’t be talking about punishing me. Instead, we should be focused on you getting better.”

“Yeah, but I love to tease you,” he gave another chuckle. “It keeps me from scratching at the ever maddening itch I have going on right now. Healing is such a pain in the ass. The itch is, of course, the absolute worst part. I hate being bored. I never lay around in one place this long unless I’m asleep. Really, who does this?”

“Well don’t scratch the itch.” Goldie couldn’t help but laugh and shook her head. “Well, what can I do to help you, Mister Grumpy Bear?” she teased him. Getting up on her elbow, she looked down at him with a smile,

love shining in her eyes. “How can I help you, babe? You are hurt because of me; so let me help you feel better. What do you need?”

“Woman, what did I say about blaming yourself for others’ actions? Do you really want a week of no sex and orgasms? I am fully prepared to enforce it.” He gave a tug, and held her close to kiss her lips, he said, “You can just distract me and tell me some more about yourself.”

“Well let’s see.” She moved so she could lie against him once more, and lay her hand lightly over his chest. “I have these three amazing men who would move hell for me if I needed them to, and I adore them for that. I also have a family now. That’s something I’ve never had before, and again, it’s because of those amazing men. Oh, and I do have to smack one of them occasionally with a rolled up newspaper because he likes to take the last of the coffee. That’s bad.”

“Really? Just who is this fiend you speak of?” Arkadios was really grinning at her. “I would have the name of this dastardly beast so I could slay him for you, dearest and most beautiful female. No male should ever be so cowardly as to steal the last of the coffee.”

“Oh really now?” Goldie rose up on her elbow and looked at him with a laugh. “That would be you,” she told him with a laugh. “You always tend to get the very last cup of coffee. I don’t know how you manage it but you do, and it drives me absolutely bat shit crazy. Then again...” She shrugged with a grin, “I really don’t mind all that much, if you would just rinse the canteen afterwards, that would be great.” She hated the last cup of coffee in the pot, but what was worse was the little burnt part it always left for some reason.

“I usually am distracted, or on my way somewhere. I’m sorry though,” he said quietly. “I will try to do better, and I will try to remember to rinse the pot. Or at least throw some water in it so you don’t have to scrape off the little bits at the bottom.”

“Thank you,” she said with a grin. “That’s all I ask. Or just put it off the burner so I know it’s in need of being cleaned. I promise then I won’t smack your beautiful behind with the rolled up newspaper, or something like that.”

“The last time wasn’t a newspaper you smacked me with. I know this because there was a squeeze involved. You say you don’t want excuses to smack me, but I think you go looking for them. You just love to grope me, admit it,” he was grinning again.

“Well what can I say? You have the singularly most amazing ass. I have to give it a good squeeze from time to time because it really is delectable.

Plus, squeezing your ass typically winds us up in a closet or locked office somewhere, and it's really why I do it.”

“I did kinda figure that out,” he said, “given you always squeeze me in such a way it feels more like you’re going for my balls. I just figured it was your code for I’m wet and you need to fuck me now, but if you’re saying it’s not...” He blinked his eyes a couple of times.

“Are you kidding me? You look at me and I’m wet and ready. It doesn’t matter where I am or what I’m doing. All it takes is a look from you, a scent of your cologne, or whatever scent is that you put on, and I’m ready like, whoa.”

“I don’t wear cologne, none of us do. Our noses are too sensitive for such scents that are manufactured. It’s all me, babe. Well, me and the shampoo and soap I use but mostly me.” Arkadios moved his head slightly to look at her. “So, you’re telling me, right here and now you are wet?”

“Damn straight I am. Even though we went through what we did. I can’t seem to help it and I hate it. I shouldn’t be lusting after you with you hurt, but I am and it’s killing me. Goodness gravy it’s killing me.”

“Why are you hating it?” he was frowning at her now. “We’re alive. We’re healthy and sexual adults. Sex is an amazing way to reaffirm your lease on life. It’s one of the most primal ways to be with another person.”

“I’m hating it because you are hurt. Don’t you get that? You were shot only hours ago, Arkadios. There is no way we can have sex. None. You are still trying to heal, honey. Seriously?”

“Yeah, so?” he was grinning again. “Sex is wonderfully rejuvenating. Mind and body,” he wiggled his brows. “I’m not saying right this moment. I do want to have both hands on you, and I’m still waiting for all sensation to get back into my arm.”

“Well then, when you are fully and completely up to it, no pun intended, we will do it. Not a moment before. I mean it. I happen to really love you, and I don’t want you harmed any more than you already are. So please, just lay there, rest, and get better.”

“I am, love, I am,” he whispered. Pressing a kiss to her forehead, he gave her a squeeze with his good arm. “But I’m also bored out of my mind. I hate just laying around; it’s not me. Unless it’s after hot, steamy, and wild sex, what is the point?”

“I know, but you have to heal. Later we can make up for all the missed hot and steamy sex, but right now you just heal.” She laid her head on his

shoulder again and asked, “Do you want me to get you a book? Turn on the TV? Anything?”

“No, couldn’t hold the book and at this time of day, there’s nothing good on TV. No, I just want to have you here with me. Tell me a story, darling, anything. But avoid saying sex for a while will you please? When you say it, you get this look on your face that has me picturing your lips wrapped around my cock and well, it’s starting to get a little painful.”

Damn. And that fast, she lost her train of thought and any story she had in her mind flew out the window. She could all but taste him, and it made her whimper. “Uhm...a story.” Crap, a story? Seriously? “Once upon a time?” she asked with a grin. She then proceeded to tell the story of how they met, in her own personal words.

Arkadios was a rapt audience; of course, he was kind of stuck there. He laughed in all the right places, growled occasionally at her word choices, and grinned at her version of events. When she was done, he was chuckling. “Well, it’s not exactly a rated G version of events, but well done.”

“Thank you, thank you. I do aim to please,” Goldie teased him with a grin. “Now, you ready for a nap? Or are you ready to try to get up and take a shower to get the blood off you that I couldn’t get because you are just too damn big?”

“Oh now you’re complaining about my size?” he chuckled softly. “Woman. I could go for a shower now that you mentioned it. I’m not only itching at the wound but whatever is stuck under my arm and back. You’ll have to help me though. I won’t be able to reach everything with just one arm.”

“You just want me naked in the shower with you, admit it,” Goldie teased. Sitting up, she looked down at him, “Do you think you should shower? I said it without even thinking. I don’t want you to be hurt because of doing something you shouldn’t already.”

“I feel nasty right now, I need a shower. The wound is closed, it’s still healing yes, but a gentle wash won’t be all that bad. And you can wear a t-shirt or a swimsuit if you don’t want to be naked in there. Though, since I know what you look like naked, you will be naked in my head.”

Goldie laughed and shook her head, “You know damn good, and well I’m going to be naked in there. All right, let’s get you up and into the shower. Then, if you are feeling like it, you can sit in the chair and I will bring you up some food okay?”

“Food would be awesome. Especially since I was shot before I got my ribs.” Arkadios rolled slowly and eased up to a sitting position. “I swear. If they ate all the ribs then I’m really going to be pissed off. I was looking damn forward to those ribs.” Pushing to his feet he wavered a moment, “I’m good, just a little light headed, but I’m good.”

“Don’t worry. I think Josie saved you some. She was like a little cub defending your food and all. You would have been proud.” The child had made Goldie cry with the way she had reacted. “She’s such a special little girl, and loves you like crazy. When you are all cleaned up and ready for company I know she will want to see you.”

“I adore that cub,” he smiled. Moving slowly, he went toward the bathroom. “You are coming right? I seriously need someone to keep me on my feet and help me wash up, babe. Then I very definitely need to eat, I’m fucking starving.”

“Yes, I am going to come with you. Someone needs to ensure you don’t fall down, and since the guys all voted me to do it,” she grinned, “then I get the humble and amazing pleasure. Now then, do you need help to the bathroom?”

“They just don’t like being shown up even while I’m injured,” he grinned. He stopped in the bathroom to lean into the mirror. He was poking at the wound site lightly with a frown on his face. “It’s actually healing pretty quickly.”

She smacked his hand and shook her head, “And if you would quit poking it, I’m positive it would heal even faster. I mean it, stop it,” she muttered with a grin. “It’s really okay, love. Just stop poking at it because I swear if you make it bleed or make it worse.”

“I wasn’t poking right at it, I was poking around it. I wanted to see how it was healing.” He turned toward her, and grabbing her hand, pulled her closer. “Quit worrying so much. I’ll be fine in no time, then I will be jumping your ass.”

“Promises, promises. Just make sure you make good on them, buddy, or I am seriously going to be one pissed off woman. And since finding the three of you, evidently one pissed off horny woman,” she added with a grin.

“I never make promises I don’t keep. Haven’t you learned that yet?” He grinned down at her and pressed a kiss to her lips. “Shower now if you wouldn’t mind turning the water on. It’s a bad angle for me to get at the taps and adjust the temp.”

“You just wanna see me bend over to watch my ass. Admit it,” she teased him with a grin. “It’s okay though,” she made a show of turning around. Lifting one leg, she put it on the tub edge and leaned into the shower, turning her head to watch him and winked before she looked back at the faucet to get it all started.

Snorting, he let out a breath and rubbed at his chest. “Babe, I’m trying to keep my eyes off any part of you that gets my engine running, mainly because you won’t let me jump your bones. Just go along with this, will you please and quit wiggling your fine ass.”

“I’m trying very hard, but good heavens, I want you and I hate feeling like this when you are hurt,” she admitted. “Damn it all to hell and back again, I was hoping to be able to get lucky tonight and I will not do that without you joining in.”

“Never say you hate needing me, Goldie.” He moved closer to her, a hand coming to rest on her back. “I’ll always need you desperately. And I happen to love knowing you need me just as much, if not more. It makes me warm all over.”

“Well then you should be burning up right now, because I want you so badly I’m ready to come just from your touch. But...” she stepped back, sadly, “we can’t. When you are healed I fully expect you to fuck me until neither of us can walk, but till then it’s all PG, honey.”

“PG has a bit of potential, not a lot, but some. I’d prefer fourteen plus,” he grinned. His smile slipped at her growl, “Right, behaving. And by the way, you really are getting good at the growl. I’m actually rather impressed.”

“Well I should be getting good at it since you are always growling at me and so are the other two. Believe me, I have to be good at growling or else I will be totally and completely screwed, darling mine.”

“We don’t growl at you that much, do we?” He was frowning as he watched her. “I didn’t think we were. Babe, you have to say something if we’re getting on your nerves, or being assholes. We’re guys, and we don’t really notice ninety-eight percent of things in the real world.”

“Yes, you really do growl at me a lot, especially during sex. Did I mention it’s totally hot? I always know when one of you needs me because you walk by me and you have this little growl. The only time it gets on my nerves is when we can’t do anything about it.”

“So we’re not actually driving you insane with the growling?” he sounded confused. “Woman, is the growling a good thing or not? Cause right now, I’m more than a little clueless on your feelings about the situation.”

“No, you aren’t driving me insane,” she said with a laugh. “It’s sexy and I love it. I never want you guys to stop growling because I think it’s so damn hot I could just melt from it. Why do you think I’ve begun to growl right back at you as much as I can?”

“Again, male, clueless,” he waved his hand up and down his body. “I’m lucky I can even dress myself most days given the lack of oxygenated blood getting to my big brain.” He drew back and stepped into the shower, “Come on, I’m starting to rethink the whole shower, so get me clean before I wimp out and go lay back down.”

Goldie snickered and nodded. “All right. Let’s get you in and out of the shower so we can do what we need to do, and then get you dried and in a chair. Hopefully, after you have a bite or three to eat you will feel sleepy and can go to bed for the rest of your healing.”

“You’ll stay with me, right?” he asked moving under the water. His eyes were on her though, watching her through the spray. “Goldie?” he reached out a hand to her. His expression was worried and tense.

“Yes, Arkadios, there is nowhere else in the world I want to be than with you. Only you. I will not leave you while you are healing, and you darn well know that. I would never leave you while you are hurting, Ark. Never. You wouldn’t ever leave me, so there is no way in hell I would leave you.”

“Just checking,” he smiled. “I do so love to see fire in your eyes. Gives you this whole avenging Valkyrie look. It’s rather hot I must say,” he wiggled his brows at her. “So get in here and wash my back, will you please? I feel icky.”

“Yes, sir,” she said with a grin. Getting into the shower with him, she reached up and touched her hand to his chest. “I love any opportunity I get to touch you, my big bear. And washing you,” she licked her lips and looked up, “sudsy hands on your body. Hell yes, I’m there!”

“Just remember I’m wounded when you’re getting me all wound up.” He held up the bar of soap for her. “So try to keep your attentions where they are needed and not where my body demands them to be.”

“I won’t touch you below the waist. I will let you do that because I’m sure if I were to even bend to do your legs, there would be some issues. We

both know it," she mumbled. "So I will do your chest, arms and back, but you do the rest. Can you handle that?"

"Good plan," he smiled down at her. His hand came up to cup her face. "There's no need to look so disgruntled. We will play later and then all bets are off. For now, just clean me up and get me some food so I can pass out again."

"Sounds good. Just look up and let me get you cleaned up, babe." Goldie then did what she had told him she would. She very carefully washed his chest, back, arms, and shoulders. When she was done, she passed him the soapy cloth and said, "Your turn, big boy."

"I get to wash your back and chest," he grinned at her. When she shook her head and pointed down at his legs, he pouted. "You are so not any fun." Ark backed into the corner and leaned over slowly to wash, but soon came back up without finishing. His face was pale and there was sweat, not water, beaded on his upper lip. "Bending over was a really bad idea," he whispered.

"Okay, I will pull down the shower head and get you rinsed off. After that, we will ensure you are put in a comfy chair. Will you be okay in a chair or do you need to be in bed instead?" She was worried for him.

"A chair will be just fine," he said. Arkadios put a hand on her head and stroked her hair lightly. "As long as I don't have to move the damned thing. Or move from it anytime soon." He let out a breath and pushed away from the wall slowly as she withdrew and turned the water off.

"Don't worry, you won't have to move, and when you do I will ensure there is plenty of help there for us, okay? I don't want you being hurt any more than you are now." She hesitated and looked at him, "Would you heal faster if you were a bear again?"

"At this stage, no. In either form it's the same healing time at this point." Moving out of the shower, he stopped on the rug. Reaching out, he grabbed a towel and flipping it over his head, rubbed it over his hair and face.

She began to take another towel and dry him off. "Okay, you should be good to walk into the bedroom now. I will get some loose pants for you to put on so if Josie wants to come and visit with you, she can without embarrassment, deal?"

"Excellent deal in my mind," he said, passing her the towel he'd used. "Top middle drawer should have something in it. Otherwise, you'll have to

wade through the extra room we call a closet to find something.”

“Sounds good.” She moved to the dresser and pulled out a pair of loose silk pajama bottom pants. Moving to his side, she bent down. “Feet first then I will pull them up. And I promise I won’t touch you in places that will give us both trouble, promise,” she assured him with a smile.

“You really can’t go around saying things like that, Goldie. Not when you’re naked and kneeling at my feet as you are. Because, once again, all blood is rushing to parts of me that don’t get a vote and yet speak much too loudly to be ignored with ease.”

“Sorry.” She quickly got the bottoms on him and pulled up. She was looking right at him when she tied the string and smiled. “There, now you won’t frighten anyone.” Well after his erection went down that was.

“Right,” he gave her one of *those* looks. “Maybe a pillow on my lap to hide the fact I’m easily excited. At least until Josie leaves the room. I really don’t want Laurie giving me another lecture on advancing her daughter’s sex education further than she’s comfortable with.”

“Good point. All right, a pillow for your lap. We can say it’s to hold the tray or something like that. That way Laurie won’t have to give either of us a chat because that would be embarrassing.”

“Works for me,” he chuckled. Heading for an armchair near the windows, he flopped into it with a groan. “I am so glad I’m off my feet. Never realized just how exhausting it is to walk a few feet and take a shower.”

“Well how often have you been shot??” Goldie asked and brought a pillow. “Nevermind, please don’t answer that because I am not so sure I would survive knowing just how many times you have been hurt. It’s killing me to know you’ve been hurt this badly. I would like to request that none of my men get hurt again. Please.”

“We’ll try, babe,” he said grabbing her hand when she got close enough. “But we can’t make a promise like that. The world and people in it are too uncertain, and can’t be controlled. I promise to duck though if I can see the next shooter aiming my way. This one I didn’t even see.” His fingers tightened around hers.

“I don’t think any of us did,” she whispered softly. “And that’s just not good. I am very unhappy you have been hurt. I want and need for you to be well. I happen to like it when you are all well and healthy. Not just because

I really love being able to get naked with you at anytime but because, well damn it, just because.”

Smiling up at her, he tugged on her hand until she sat on his lap. “I know, Goldie, trust me, I feel the same way. I’m healing, I’ll be back to normal in a couple more hours and the scar will be gone by morning or tomorrow afternoon at the absolute latest. I’ll be fine, little mate.”

“Good. You damn well had better be because I will expect nothing less than that from you. I need you healed as soon as possible so we can all go about our lives. We somehow have to be able to ensure those assholes pay for what they did to you, but it will come later. For now it’s healing.”

“It is, but my belly is growling, and you know growling just isn’t good.” He gave her a pointed look and batted his lashes at her. “I hate to ask, darling mine, but I’m starving here. My gut is trying to eat my spine and my spine is protesting.”

“All right, I hear you,” Goldie snickered. “You stay here. I will go get food, and let Josie know she can come see you as long as she doesn’t jump on you. If you want to hold her, you can wait for one of us to bring her up to you and I mean it.” Goldie touched his cheek and nodded, “I will be back.”

“Don’t be long,” he called out as she headed for the door.

Chapter Eleven

Monday morning dawned bright, clear, and already warm. And quiet, very quiet. After the loudness of the weekend and all the chaos, it was eerily quiet. A warm male hand slid slowly up her belly to cup her breast and squeezed just right. Rough fingers found her tight nipple and rolled it slowly, tugging ever so slightly. “Good morning, little mate,” sleep roughened words reached her ear.

He felt her body shifting, moving under him until she wrapped her arm around his neck. “God, I love waking like this,” she whispered against the curve of his neck. “Especially when you are so very nice and warm, so hard too,” her voice teased as her hands moved down his chest and cupped him boldly.

“Are you trying to get me in trouble?” Arkadios muttered. His entire body had jolted at her touch and Mahon had grumbled something nasty from his spot on the bed. “If I push him out he’s going to be seriously pissed.”

“Hey, I can’t help it. Someone reaches out and starts to tweak my nipple and I feel hard cocks around me, I can’t help myself. I want to do a little more. Do you feel like it?” Goldie rose on her elbow and looked down at Arkadios. “How are you feeling?”

He rolled his eyes at her. “Woman. I was balls deep in you yesterday. Not once, but twice and now you’re asking.” Reaching up, he cupped her face and pulled her closer to him. “I love you, Goldie, and I appreciate how you worry for me, but I’m fine, love. And if you aren’t going to do anything with that cock you have in hand, let go so I can go and have an icy shower.”

“Oh, I have all kinds of plans for this cock I have in my hand. The question is if anyone else is going to join us,” she said with a grin and wiggled down in the bed. Adjusting herself so she could put her mouth on him, she licked the dome of his cock happily, and moaned. She then began really to work on him, her mouth closing over his cock and moving her head up and down him eagerly, licking and nibbling as she did so.

“Oh good God,” he growled out. One of his hands found her head and then his fingers slid into her hair. His hold was tight, but not too tight. He wasn’t pushing or pulling, just holding her as he growled. Suddenly other

hands were on her body, one sliding between her legs, and one on her breast.

He could feel her breath on his cock as the hands moved all over her body. When fingers parted her nether lips, and a tongue moved over her clit, she inhaled and squeezed, sucking him deeper and demanding more.

A growl sounded against her pussy, “Damn, woman, you’re so fucking wet,” Torben voiced, his mouth on her clit. The hands had to belong to Mahon, whose cock was rubbing between the cheeks of her ass slowly.

She pulled off Arkadios and moaned. “I’m always wet when I’m with you. Haven’t you noticed?” she moaned and then put her mouth back on him once more.

“Oh, I definitely noticed that,” Mahon said in her ear. His cock was pressing slowing into her ass. “You get wetter the closer we are to you. The smell of your pussy is so rich and perfect. Makes me hard as soon as I catch it.”

Goldie could only moan. She pressed back against Mahon and shuddered as she felt him entering her ass slowly. Her tongue worked on Ark’s cock. She licked and moved, and was determined to take and give everything for these amazing men.

Mahon’s hands were on her breasts, plucking and rolling her nipples. Torben’s mouth was on her clit, his fingers pushing deep into her pussy. Arkadios was rocking his hips insistently, pushing his cock deeper into her mouth.

Goldie took Arkadios deeper than she ever had before, with the need and excitement driving her. Her hand began to move over his balls, gently rolling them and rubbing her pointer finger around the rim of his ass, desperate to make him come, needing it like she needed air to breathe.

There was a deep growl, Arkadios likely, given how his hips were jolting, his cock pushing deeper into her mouth. Mahon’s hands were working her nipples furiously as he slammed his cock into her ass repeatedly. And Torben, God the things he was doing with his fingers and mouth, should be absolutely illegal.

She screamed around Arkadios’s cock. The first salty taste of him hitting the back of her throat had her gulping and drinking him down. Her pleasure filled cries lost against the turgid flesh she refused to let go of. She was desperate, pushing back against her men and demanding their orgasms right along with hers.

Mahon's snarl and his grip on her breasts warned her of what was coming. He shoved his cock in deep and came, his seed splashing into her ass. Arkadios was as tight as a bowstring, and then collapsed, just deflating with a sigh. The only one still alert was Torben who was chuckling softly from between her legs.

Goldie lay her head on Arkadios's belly and smiled. Her hand moved to Torben's hair and she smiled. "I love you too, T."

Torben pressed a kiss to her thigh, "Love you too, babe. And when you regain your breath I have a problem I need your help with, which means we'll need to get a move on since Josie should be up and wanting breakfast sometime in the next twenty minutes."

"Don't worry," Mahon said in a breathless tone. "I'll get her fed and ready for the day."

"He's such a giver," Goldie said with a happy grin and looked to Torben, "What sort of problem do you have, T? Can you not get your email to work again? Is the printer running low on toner?" she teased. "Oh, I know, you need your pencils sharpened again." The things they would come up with to get her alone just made her grin, giggle and everyone knew just what was happening between them, and she honestly didn't care.

"Actually, I think it's more a mechanical issue. See, there's this rod, seems to be stuck in the on position. It's a little awkward. As it is right now, I'd really appreciate your expertise on the situation. I think between the two of us we can get it to loosen up and get back where it needs to be for the day." Torben was grinning wide, deep creases in each of his cheeks and his eyes were dancing with mischief.

"Well it's a good thing I'm an expert at rods and making them go into the off position isn't it?" she asked with a smirk. Feeling first Mahon and then Arkadios moving, Goldie got up on her knees over Torben. "The question is; how would you like for this expert to take care of you? I have one of three devices that would work remarkably well in helping you get to the off position."

"Well, I think for this particular venture the old slot and rod would be best. Lots of lubrication to ease its passage," he told her. He moved his hands to her hips and pulled her closer to him. "And if that's too obscure, I want my cock buried in your wet, sweet smelling pussy now."

"Good." That was all Goldie needed to hear. Moving so she could take him into her body, she used one hand to brace herself over him and the

other to guide him in. A low moan came from her, or was it him? One of them, both of them. She rocked back on him, placed both her hands now on his chest, and shuddered from head to toe. "God, I love the way it feels when you are inside of me." Any of them, hell she loved her men and would never have enough of them.

Torben's hands moved up to her breasts, his fingers pulling on her nipples. "I love having you wrapped around me. Your pussy is a hot, wet fist that holds me perfectly. Move, baby," he said, lifting his hips up slightly.

Her nails dug into his chest, and she did just that. She began to move on him. She began to rock back and forth with the sounds of their flesh meeting, her pussy milking him and their shared moans were like pure erotic fantasy to her ears. "Torben, there," it was a demand as her body shifted slightly, his cock digging deeper into her cunt, her eyes closing in ecstasy.

In the next moment he had her flipped over, her legs up over his arms. He slammed into her repeatedly, his cock driving deeper. "You are fucking beautiful, love. Sexy, tousled, so warm, and absolutely perfect."

"And you. Fuck, you take my breath away." Goldie arched her neck; she fisted the sheets under her and moved right along with him, demanding more as he gave it. "Especially like this, when you let the Alpha out." She loved it. The feel of the bear nearly there on the surface, the strength, the everything. It was what she needed, what she wanted.

He gave a deep, rough sounding laugh, a bit of growl behind it. "You bring it out in me. You and your saucy mouth, your sexy ass, and your sweet as honey pussy." Torben pressed forward to kiss her, sucking hard on her lip as he ground his hips into her.

"Good. Let him out to play at least a small bit," she demanded and bit his lip in turn. "I want him to come out and play. Not fully, but a little." She couldn't handle a full bear. They all knew that, but they knew how far they could push her too.

"Did you know," he whispered with a wicked grin. "We can change parts of us. Our eyes, teeth, claws," his voice was more growl now, his eyes switching back and forth between his normal human eyes and the bear, which always lived close to the surface, just under his skin, as he pushed his cock slowly through her tight channel.

“God no, I didn’t know that,” she rumbled a purr of pure pleasure at the feeling. “Please tell me though that you can partially shift and use your bear cock,” she voiced with a little concern.

Chuckling, “Oh, no, but our bears are close to the surface when we get excited or mad, really anytime our emotions are on overload,” Torben continued to explain as he pushed in and out, “It is only certain parts we can control, it is not our animal counterparts member. You would never be able to handle that, love.”

“God that, yes,” she whimpered and clawed at him ruthlessly. It felt so very, very fucking good to have him deep inside of her. “Why are you just now telling me?” she asked through gasped breathing. “Especially, if it is not your bear. Not that I am complaining, ‘cause damn, your normal size is nothing to be ashamed of. I am getting quite fond of each of your extremely above average cocks,” Goldie said, then Torben pushed deep and all she could do was yell, “Hell, yes!”

“Because we didn’t want to overwhelm you with everything at once, love.” He was grinning, his teeth longer and sharper than before. Suddenly, he pulled her up so she was sitting on his cock in his lap, his hands on her ass as he lifted and dropped her over him.

“God, yes.” Goldie she panted, enjoying the little bit of pain she felt in this position and as quick as the pain came, it just as quickly turned into pure pleasure. “God, yes. I want to feel you everywhere.” She watched him in rapt fascination, her eyes on his teeth and smiled. Tilting her head to the side, she rode him faster, “Bite me when you come. Let’s see how far we both can push.” She was being demanding, but this was her Torben, he would let her and he would still keep her safe.

A scream of pure pleasure escaped her lips from the feeling of his cock filling her as she rode him. Moaning, she nodded, “Good, right there. Perfect.” God, it felt so very good. “Harder,” she moaned.

He let out a low growl and scraped his teeth over her shoulder lightly. Then he began to move, the burn was amazing. He stretched her from opening to womb as he pushed his thick cock through her folds.

Perfect and intense pleasure, amazing feelings of sheer joy rocked her. “So good.” She was digging her nails into his arms. She knew there was blood welling under her nails, but it didn’t matter, all that mattered was right now. Him inside of her, and both of them taking their pleasure. “Bite me when you come,” she said again, so very close.

“Oh, I will,” he growled out deeply. He lifted her legs up higher, his cock rubbing over her clit with each thrust. He moved his mouth over her skin, adjusting, shifting. The growl began to build in his chest, growing, getting louder and then his teeth sank into her shoulder. The snarl he let loose shook everything in the room as he slammed into her and came deep inside of her pussy.

Screaming right along with him, following with her own release. Her whole body shook in the sheer pleasure of his bite. Her orgasm was more intense; it was more surreal than anything yet. It seemed as if life were only getting better and better with each single orgasm they shared.

When he collapsed on top of her, all they could do was groan. Breathing was a chore, harsh breaths in and out, repeatedly at a fast pace. Finally, he rolled them, putting her on top with his hand on her ass to hold her.

She felt him shrinking inside of her body and sighed. “Amazing,” she thought she said aloud, was sure she had said it aloud at least. Rubbing her cheek to his chest, she simply grinned. “Let’s hope they are keeping Josie occupied enough that she won’t come looking for us yet.”

“She’ll be running circles around Mahon as he jumps through hoops for her breakfast. Every time she’s here there’s a routine. We ask what she wants for breakfast, she gives us a dozen options, hems and haws and then settles for the chocolate chip pancakes just like always. She’s very good at making us jump through hoops.”

She laughed at that and nodded, “This is very true. That child does tend to make everyone do something. She’s very good at getting what she wants. I like that about her. She’s a good kid, that’s for sure.”

“She is, but spoiled. Hell, we get her for a week here and there, and by the time her parents get her back, it’s usually not good. Though we do exhaust her, she tends to sleep rather well for the first week back home. On the downside, we’re not always too careful with our language around her. The last time she went back home Laurie sent us a twenty page email the next day ranting at us. I think I still have it. I’ll have to look. It’s actually a fairly entertaining read given its one hundred percent true.”

Goldie laughed at that and shook her head. “Well it’s a very good thing then that you now have me to help you with your language and stuff.” Although most times she cussed like a sailor herself. For now though,” she moved slightly. “For now, I need for you to get us into the shower, deal?”

“Yeah, I suppose we should,” he chuckled. Pressing a kiss to her cheek, he sat up with her held tight to him. When he got off the bed she was still draped over him, his cock still buried deep. “Hold on tightly, darling mine.”

“Oh God,” she moaned and pressed her forehead to his shoulder. “That feels so good.” She could stay like this for the rest of eternity, or as long as they would let her at least. “I think I would be able to walk like this for the rest of time if it weren’t illegal or whatever,” she teased with a smile.

“I think it’s the whatever that could really get us in trouble,” he smiled. As he walked to the bathroom, he hugged her close. “But I do have to say I quite enjoy walking around with you as you are. Especially that little squeeze you give every time I jolt you even the tiniest bit.”

“I think you will get even more of those once we are in the shower. If you turn it on and put me against the wall, I bet you and I can each get off at least once more.” She was positive they would both be able to come at least once more.

“At least once more,” he agreed happily. He took them into the bathroom and into the shower stall. Once he had her back pressed to the wall, he reached out with a hand and got the water running. “Holy hell,” he jolted and nearly dropped her. “Fuck that was cold. You okay, Goldie?”

“Damn it that was cold,” she growled, and shivering, huddled up closer to him. “I think you need to get us warm, quickly and in a hurry.” Her hands moved over his shoulders, down his arms. “I think once you begin to move again we will be very, very okay. Don’t you?”

“Moving is good, build up a little heat with some good old fashioned friction.” He kissed her hard, his hands adjusting her against the wall. In the next moment, he was moving, thrusting into her hard, fast and deep.

“Yes, friction is an amazing thing,” she said with a moan. “God, yes.” She shuddered with delighted need. “That feels so very good.” And it did. The feeling of him taking her hard and fast, hell yes.

Torben grabbed her hands, pressing them to the wall over her head. The maneuver thrust her breasts out, her nipples rubbing over his chest with every movement and breath. His gaze was intent on her as he licked his lips. “You are so beautiful,” he whispered.

“And you are so freaking hot.” She felt the purr in the back of her throat, the moan from being forced into that position. She loved it. God she loved it and wanted more. She was all for equal power for men and women,

but when it came to making love with her bears, she wanted to submit to them every time.

“That’s not me, that’s all you. Sexy woman that you are.” He pushed their hands up higher; his thrusts slow, long and deep. He leaned closer and kissed her, his mouth moving over hers in a lazy manner, like his cock in and out of her body.

Oh, she could argue with him until the day was ended, but all that mattered was that he felt she was the one for him, and she knew he was one of hers. That was perfect. That was the way life should be. “God, yes. So close.”

“Not yet,” he said slowing his thrusts. When she growled, all he did was grin at her. “Now, now, darling, no need for that. We’re taking our time this go round; I don’t want you flying over the edge yet. I want you to have a slow burn and then a massive explosion.”

“You are totally going to kill me one day,” she teased him, but moved right along with him. Leaning into him, she brushed her lips over his, nibbled here and there, as she did so, and moaned happily.

His smile was one where his entire face lit up from the inside out. “I’m glad you approve of me. I’d hate to think you found something wrong with me or something distasteful.”

Goldie screamed, her orgasm coming out of absolutely nowhere. Pleasure rushed through her body in that moment, and she knew that nothing, absolutely nothing, would ever feel as good as her men making love with her, fucking her, taking her. Owning her.

His growl and the hot splash of his seed in her pussy signaled Torben’s orgasm. With a shudder, he let her hands go. His own arms fell down to her sides; his hands barely resting at her waist while her arms hit his shoulders.

Both were panting hard, and then Goldie began to giggle. She pulled Torben closer and sighed against the side of his neck. “I think you and I need to shower together every morning. I very much enjoyed this. Even if we didn’t get clean yet, it has been the best shower to date.”

He gave a throaty chuckle and kissed her throat. “I can’t wait to tell the others that. With a little bragging of course.” Torben hugged her to him and then pulled back. “But we should clean up and head down. They should be through the regular routine and food should be about ready. And if you want any, we can’t be late. You’ve seen how we all eat.” He did have a very valid point there.

“Yes, I have seen how you all eat, but I also know Mahon and Arkadios would never let me go hungry.” She grinned and added, “But not sure about you,” she said with a laugh. “And you and I both know they will always try to one-up you, so I’m going to be in for a world of hurt aren’t I?” she teased happily. “And I can’t wait.”

“I wouldn’t call it hurt so much,” he said easing her down to her feet. Stepping back, he ducked his head under the water. “Maybe a world of pleasure would be a better term,” he grinned at her as he shook his head. “Non-stop orgasms at all hours of the day and night, you never know when you’re going to get stuffed to the gills.”

“Do you know just how much pleasure it gives me to know you guys want and need me every single bit as much as I want you, if not more? I love the fact we are together in this all and always going to be together in this. I need you. All of you. And I can’t wait to have them trying to outdo you,” she added with a naughty grin.

“Of course we’re in it together, we’re mates.” He handed her the soap he’d just finished using right before he ducked under the water to rinse. When he stepped out of the spray, he ran a hand down his face. “And if you really want to egg them on, use the phrase, and you can paraphrase as much as you want. Well when Torben did that,” he grinned with a shrug. “It will get their competitive streak right the fuck up.”

She couldn’t help herself from laughing. “Oh dear God, you really want me to rile them up so they can give me a hell of a fucking don’t you?” Not that she minded, truth be told. “I love all of you,” she whispered.

“We know,” he chuckled. Leaning in he kissed her gently. “Wash up and then come on out. I’ll give you the shower for now so I don’t distract you more than necessary. Besides, I need to shave so I don’t start looking like my counterpart in my human form.” With a wink, he stepped out of the shower and shut the door gently.

“Yes you are getting rather shaggy,” she teased him with a grin. When he got out of the shower, she began to wash her body. Taking her time, she soaped her body and then hair. Taking a deep breath, she rinsed and then turned off the water. “All right, I’m all done. Will you pass me a towel please?”

The door opened and a fluffy towel was thrust in. “I can smell food, woman, hurry up,” he told her, grinning through the space of the door.

When she took the towel, he turned and headed toward the bedroom. “And there’s fresh coffee and bacon too.”

“Oh God, fresh coffee and bacon. You guys do know just what I want and need to survive in life don’t you?” she asked with a smile. “Yummers. Okay, let’s go. I will just slide one of the robes on. I will worry about getting dressed later. For now I just want to dry off enough I’m not leaving puddles everywhere.”

“Then hurry up,” he said hopping by the door tugging on his jeans. “Because I’m heading down, and I don’t plan on saving you any.” He was grinning as he jumped up and down a couple of times and did up the buttons on his fly.

Goldie laughed at him and shook her head. Pulling on Arkadios’s robe, she tied it in the front and wrapped the towel around her head. “Okay, mister smarty pants, let’s get ourselves out of here shall we? I’m ready to get the heck out of here and down to the bacon and coffee.”

“Yes ma’am,” he said. A second later, he scooped her up in his arms and headed for the stairs. “Hold onto your towel there, woman. It’s starting to unravel a little.” He jogged down the stairs and into the kitchen.

Reaching up, Goldie held onto the towel on her head and laughed as he raced down the stairs with her in his arms. She hugged him tightly, trusting him to keep her safe in his arms. “Oh that smells so good,” she called out to Arkadios and Mahon. She grinned at Josie and winked, “Did they make you everything you wanted, little J?”

“M’eh,” she shrugged. “They did their best, but they are trained like my daddy. Daddy does everything mummy tells him without a question. Here it is question after question. I speak nice and clear, my mummy and daddy says so, but they stare at me like there’s buggers on my face. I don’t like it. You may need to teach ‘em better, because hold on it’s very dishar, no that not right. I’ve got it, it’s disheartening.”

Laughing, Torben put Goldie on her feet. “I see that word a day calendar your uncle Mahon got you is being put to good use.”

“It is,” Josie grinned and looked to Mahon. “He comes up with some of the bestest gifts ever.”

“Hey,” Arkadios glared at her. “I swear, child, you are sounding more like your mother everyday. And your uncle Ark, gives you the bestest gifts ever damn it.”

“Language!” Mahon, Torben, and Josie all yelled at him.

Unable to stop herself, Goldie laughed. Holding her side, she shook her head. “Good gravy that’s utterly priceless. I wish I had a sound recorder so I could record what you guys are saying.” It was such a joy to listen to them talking and bantering with Josie like they were. One day, in the far future, they would be amazing fathers.

“By the end of the week you likely won’t want to hear any of it again,” Torben said with a grin. “Hop up on a stool and I’ll get you some java. Then I will see about getting you some food so we can all sit and eat a nice, quiet, family meal.”

Goldie had to laugh about that. There would be nothing quiet about their meal, and they all knew it. Between Josie and her questions, the guys jockeying for the last piece of whatever and whatnot, there would be no quiet meal.

“Goldie and I have the dishes,” Torben said as they began to stack everything in easy to move piles.

“Good, Josie, go get into your worksite gear. And don’t forget your boots and hardhat this time, or you’re not getting out of the truck.” Arkadios finished wiping her down with a cloth and set her on her feet. “Remember to grab your bag too, poppet. We have to go to the office for an hour first, so you’ll need something to cause chaos and mischief.”

Goldie laughed and shook her head. “Hey there, don’t give her too many ideas.” She let Torben take the dishes and moved to Josie. Going to her knees, she looked the child in the eyes and smiled. “Make sure to keep them in line for me will ya? When I get in, we will take one of their trucks and their credit card and go shopping.” No, maybe that was a bad idea since someone had tried to kill her. “Or we will do online shopping, even better.”

“Online is always fun,” Josie smiled. “But I can’t be too long. I need to go to the site and ensure the guys are keeping up to the standards of the business.” She hesitated a moment and then leaned in to hug Goldie and give her a sticky kiss on her cheek. Pulling back, she raced off at top speeds.

“So sayeth the wise and ever evolving Josie,” Mahon snickered, holding out a damp paper towel to her. “You’ve got a little something,” he waved a finger toward his cheek.

Goldie just grinned and wiped her cheek of the honey-laden kiss. “I love that kid. Just met her days ago, and I adore her more than I ever thought

was possible.” She felt a little wobbly. Truth be told, the child was something else, and Goldie wanted one just like her one day.

Ark was there to help her to her feet. “She has that effect on people, but by the weekend you’ll be happy to see her go home. Until Monday when you realized she’s not here anymore and you’re pining for a bit of time with her.”

“Oh, I will miss her greatly I’m sure,” she said with a sigh. “I miss her already, is that weird?” She looked up at Arkadios and smiled, “Aren’t you supposed to be going with Miss Josie and Mahon to the job site? Or are you staying to supervise?” she asked hopefully.

“No, we’re heading to the office. I have to do some paperwork before Josie and I head out to the site. She loves going to any of the sites. She’s one of the few people every guy that works for us allows to boss them around. She’s good about it too, and she knows her construction which makes it even better.”

“The fact we’ve been taking her to the job sites since before she could walk likely did that to her,” Torben put in. “Even in her diaper and bottle stage we had her a little hardhat and in a safety cage on the sites with us during her visits. Getting any work done while she was there from that age until she was three was mostly impossible. The kid can turn a grown man into her play thing faster than you can say Elvis is the King.”

“Oh, I do not doubt that in the least. That child has a way about her. One day she’s going to rule the world. You all know that right? The child is a born politician, or Queen, something. She’s truly unique, and not just because she’s a bear either.”

“Oh she’s something alright,” Arkadios muttered. He grabbed his travel mug from the counter and came toward her. “I’ll see you in a bit,” he smiled at her. Leaning in, he kissed her hard and fast, drawing back slowly. “Sexy minx,” he whispered. As he turned, he grabbed his bag and hardhat, “Josie! Front and center! The truck is leaving in two minutes, little bear.”

Watching them leave, Goldie was all smiles. When she looked to Torben she asked, “So why did I get voted into dish duty with you, my big bear?” She moved slowly toward him, her hands moving up his chest and then wrapping around his shoulders. “We gonna do more than dishes?” There was hope in her tone.

“Of course we’re doing more than dishes. We have a dishwasher for a reason, love. None of us like doing dishes. So except for the pan there,

everything else goes into the dishwasher. We have a half hour before we have to leave, during which time,” he winked at her, “we can do anything you want, anything at all.”

“So we could play *Dance-Dance-Revolution* on the Wii and we would be fine?” she was teasing him. God help her but she was horny again. She couldn’t seem to get enough of these men, not now and not ever. “How about you do the dishes while I go upstairs and get naked and wait for you?”

“Excellent plan, I’ll be right up. I don’t even care what the dishes look like by the end of the cycle either.” He grinned and then turned away from her. There was some serious banging a moment later.

Chapter Twelve

A knock on the wall had Goldie bringing her head up. She found Arkadios there and he didn't look happy. In fact, he looked worried, pissed and his eyes were flickering. "Need to steal you for a couple of minutes, babe. In the conference room when you can, but quickly please," he said quietly. Then he turned and stalked off, his hands were tight fists at his sides, the knuckles white.

Goldie frowned and rose from her chair. Having no idea what was going on she brought her iPad with her for notes if she needed to take them. "All right, what's up?" she asked as she caught up to him and walked into the conference room with him. Her focus on him and only him.

He caught her hand and led her into the room. Shutting the door, he tugged her toward the table where Mahon and Torben were sitting. All the blinds were pulled and the men looked way too serious. Arkadios sat and pulled her into his lap, his arms around her tight.

"The police went to have words with your old bosses and the office is empty. Their houses are empty and they are off the grid. They all emptied their accounts completely so they have cash to burn if they are careful," Torben told her softly. "They also all have weapons permits and several weapons. The cops have now bumped this up to a higher priority because of this behavior. Worse yet, when they contacted the former receptionist, she told them something odd. She said the night after the event they all came in and started making calls. They were collecting on everything they were owed, and handing the rest of jobs off to other companies. They shut down the office with huge bonuses and severance packages for everyone there, a week later. That's when the accounts were emptied and they literally vanished. As of this moment the police have no idea where they are."

Goldie frowned and shook her head. No, she wasn't hearing him right. This couldn't be happening, right? For several minutes her mouth wouldn't work, her fears far too great to do anything more than simply sit there and look from Ark to Tor and then Mahon. "And," she started but stopped, shaking her head. She didn't have words for the terror that was rolling off her in waves. "And you think they are coming for me don't you?" she whispered to them. Gulping as she did so.

“The cops think they are coming for all of us. We’ve been getting the majority of their business; we made huge contacts at the event, who basically brushed them off. The fact you work here now and obviously like us better than them, enough to allow us to touch you,” Mahon sighed heavily. “The cops know about why you left the company suddenly, we told them that. We did fudge a bit about our relationship and may have hinted it was actually going on a little longer than it was before you took up a position in the company.”

“We told them you and I have been dating pretty exclusively,” Ark said. “That while I knew you worked for a competitor we kept business separate from our lives. You had your work; I had mine, and the way it was between us. We didn’t tell them we’re all mates, some things human minds can’t always comprehend so it was put into terms they could get. But they figure that’s why they came gunning for you and I at the barbecue.”

“And that’s why Josie’s mom came and picked her up early isn’t it?” They had barely gotten to the office and the girls were locked in Goldie’s office online shopping when Laurie came to pick up Josie. She had been baffled, as had Josie, but when Laurie told her they were going to go to her husband's parents' home Goldie hadn’t thought anything about it. Instead, she had just gone back to work.

Looking up at Arkadios, she smiled, a genuine and true one of affection, “So you drew the short straw on who was dating me exclusively?” she teased. Hell, she had to at this point, it was either that or she was going to break down in hysteria and that simply wouldn’t do. Laying her head on his shoulder, she sighed. “All right. So what do we do now?”

“No short straw at all,” he said softly, hugging her close. “I love you, Goldie, it wasn’t much of a fight in the least. But since we were the two, not there for the first interview it also made some sense. Plus I wanted to do it,” he pressed a kiss to her cheek. “For now, you and I are going to disappear for a little while. Torben and Mahon can handle shit here for a little while, but the cops want to see if anyone happens to move when we do, like we’re being watched. We’re going to have a couple undercover cops following us and we’re going to a safe house that will look like a romantic getaway. At least for a couple of days, any longer than that and we won’t have clients left.”

Goldie sighed and nodded. “I love you, too,” she whispered and patted his chest. “Okay, we will do this.” She looked to Torben and Mahon, “You

will both be extra careful as well, right? Promise me nothing will happen to you while we are gone?" she all but begged. "I need you all to be safe. I love you all so much and it would kill me to lose even one of you."

"We'll be safe," Torben said. He reached across the table and took her hand in his. "We'll have undercovers with us in the office and around the house. We'll be having two staying there with us as old friends from out of town who heard the news and came to see how we were. Or apparently it's the story we were told to tell."

"Okay, as long as you guys will be safe too," she said with a sigh and closed her eyes. "I'm so sorry. I broke into your house and now have brought trouble and danger into your lives. I'm sorry for doing that to you."

"This is not your fault," Mahon said, leaning in. He too reached over to touch her. His hand landing on her wrist and he squeezed. "What those guys chose to do is on them and them alone. They chose to try to get in your pants. They chose to get smart with us in public and then pissy when we didn't rise to their bait. They chose to do something drastic because they are assholes who cut corners and gouge their clients. If it wasn't you, Goldie, it would have been some other poor woman and she may not have been as lucky to find someone to help her and care for her."

"This is very true. I have three amazing men who love me every bit as much as I love them. Maybe one day they will make an honest woman out of me but after all of the danger has passed and we are able to be free and live our lives," she was teasing... mostly. "Okay, how long do we have before we have to get out of here and head off for our romantic retreat?"

"We have an hour to get to the house and packed. Then we need to be out of there and on the road. So up you go, go grab your purse and we're gone," Arkadios said. He kissed her cheek and urged her up to her feet. "Stay in the office area and I'll come find you as soon as I do a couple things in my office and give my passwords over to the lads."

"Don't worry, I wasn't planning to leave. I will just go to my office, grab my purse, put the iPad back in my drawer, and lock it all up. You guys all know my passwords for everything, so I'm not worried about that." She sighed and closed her eyes. "I hate this," she whispered. "I hate that this is all happening."

"We know." Hands turned her and she was pressed into Ark's chest a moment later. The others were there in the next moment and all of her men were holding her. She was safely tucked between all their large, warm

bodies. "This will be resolved and we will get our lives back. But for now, we need to do whatever is necessary to get there."

Goldie took a deep breath and then pulled Torben to her first and kissed him, she didn't hold back in the kiss. When she released him, she then did the same to Mahon. She licked her lips after the last kiss and looked up at her men. "I love you. Be good. Don't scare away the temps while we are gone okay?"

"No promises," Mahon said with a sad smile. He touched her cheek. "You behave and do whatever Arkadios tells you to do. As long as it involves your safety. Anything else you make his life miserable and ensure he keeps those cops pointed in the right direction so you can come home sooner."

"I will," she whispered softly. "Just please make sure you guys don't go through too many people? Please? I would have to send out a whole huge florist shop full of apology bouquets when I get back," she muttered and touched Mahon's cheek as well. "I mostly always do everything that Arkadios tells me." She grinned over her shoulder at him and added, "I only ignore him when I know it's going to get me spanked." Or something.

"I see a lot of spanking in your future," Torben chuckled. Leaning in, he kissed her again, "And remember the advice I gave you as well. Might be a good time to test it out since you'll have the time."

"Advice? What advice?" Mahon looked over at him.

"Just a few little nuggets of information I thought she'd find amusing and useful." He gave her another hug and then let her go. "Well, since you two are heading off, I'd better get on the phone for a temp to take over your job for the interim. Be safe, both of you and if you need anything, call. We'll be there faster than you could believe."

"Thank you, boys," she whispered and nodded. Taking a deep breath, she licked her lips and looked to Arkadios. "Let's get out of here and do what we need to in order to go into hiding," she whispered.

"Grab your stuff, love. I'll meet you in your office in a couple minutes." Leaning in, he kissed her gently, "I love you, Goldie. Go, I'll only be five minutes at the most," Ark promised her.

Goldie watched him leave and she shook her head. "I have my everything," she said to Arkadios and laughed, "This is really going to be hard on him isn't it?" She was worried about not only Torben and Mahon, but Arkadios as well. "Will he be okay?"

“He’ll be fine, we’ll all be fine. Go and get your things and I will meet you in a few minutes.” Arkadios pushed her gently toward the door and out into the main office. “I’ll be right there, promise.” One more small push and Arkadios moved off toward his office.

Shaking her head, Goldie went to her office, grabbed her purse and was back out and waiting in the door to her office a minute later. She watched everyone milling around, watched the people who made the office run, and saw more than one of them look at her almost in askance of what was happening. She didn’t say a word, couldn’t and wouldn’t say a word because honestly what could she say? In the end, she simply waited.

Arkadios walked toward her slowly. He had a look on his face that was part apology and part sadness. When he stopped in front of her, he touched her cheek. “Come on, love, let’s get out of here. Torben and Mahon will explain anything that needs to be explained. But we have to get to the house and pack so we can head out. Do we need to stop by your place for anything?”

“No, I’ve pretty much moved in with you guys, remember? The only things left at my place are plants and furniture.” She was going to sublet to someone until her lease was over and then really move in with the guys.

“Just checking. Didn’t want you getting all up my ass over something I didn’t ask. Like the last time,” he rolled his eyes at her. Then he grinned, a much more relaxed smile than earlier. “Let’s get moving. Our escort is more than ready for us and awaiting our departure. I think they just want to get moving so their boss can stop handing them orders and dos and don’ts.”

“Thank you for asking,” she said with a smile. “All right, let’s get going.” Slipping her hand into his, she gave a slight squeeze. “I will just think of this as an early honeymoon. Maybe it will get you guys into thinking about making an honest woman out of me, and get one of you asking me,” she teased. She had to tease or she would break down and cry.

“We’re all a little terrified you’d say no to be honest.” He led her out of the building and to his truck. Once they were moving, he looked over. “But, if you’re really interested,” he smiled at her. “Well then, you’ll just have to wait a little more. Don’t worry though, we’ve got plans for you, sugar.”

“Good. And just so you know,” she reached out and laid her hand on his thigh. “I would never tell you no, Arkadios. You know that. I love the three of you far too much to tell you no or to give up such happiness.”

“We love you too,” he smiled over at her. “Always. No matter what, we’re with you through it all.” He took her hand in his and squeezed her fingers before pressing a kiss to her palm. Then rested their hands on his thigh again, fingers laced as he drove them toward their home.

“Good,” she said with a smile. Turning, she took in a deep breath and again apologized for what she brought into their lives. “I’m so very sorry for all of this. I’ve turned your lives upside down so I really hope I am worth it.”

“You are worth everything, Goldie,” he said quietly. “And again, you did not bring this into our lives. The assholes brought this into our lives when they tried to hurt you, all of us. We will stop them and then we will get on with our lives. We will have our future, babe—a good, happy, and sex filled one.”

“I hope so.” Goldie knew he would never lie to her, and knew he was being fully honest with her. “For life that is a very long and full life. Not just happy and sex filled, but filled with our family as well. The family I’ve adopted from you guys.”

“You can damn well have most of them. Well, except for Josie,” he grinned. “She’s all mine. That kid is amazing, and I’m never giving her up for anyone.” Squeezing her fingers, he shot her a look. “Course, we’re likely to have a few just like her, something I’m looking forward to.”

“Me too. I want children, Ark. So very much. I know I wanted to wait but maybe we should think about starting soon? Well, after this mess is all over and done with?” One thing with this happening, it made her realize life was short and she didn’t want to waste a moment of it.

“We’re going to have some time on our hands. We should at least practice a little. Ensure you’re well versed in the baby making process.” The grin he had on his face said he was looking forward to all of the process. “See what might work best for you and all that.”

“I think that will work wonderfully well for me actually. I think we should practice often. I love practicing.” She was repeating herself, a great deal. “So yes, we will practice a great deal together. While we are on this mini-forced-pseudo-vacation.”

“Hey, I thought this was a mini-forced-pseudo-honeymoon, woman.” He shot her a pout and sighed. “And here I was looking forward to the pseudo-honeymoon sex too. Pseudo-vacation just sounds so exhausting. All the sightseeing, doing things, and so little time to have wild and kinky sex.”

That had her laughing and she shook her head, “Okay, okay. Mini-forced-pseudo-honeymoon. I like the way that sounds better as well. Sounds far more romantic and far sexier.” She squeezed his thigh and added, “As long as whoever our watchers will be and they aren’t in the same home as us, and they can’t see us, we will be golden.”

“I don’t know the arrangement yet, not even sure if they’ve chosen a spot yet. I think they are keeping it fluid in case something changes. But in a couple of hours, we’ll know for sure where we are going and just what we’re getting into. For now, let’s worry on trying not to forget something. With this trip, if we do forget something we’re out of luck. It’s not as if we can run to the local market or mall to pick it up. We can’t be seen once we’re tucked away.”

“All right, don’t worry. We will get everything we need. You pack your things, I will pack mine, and we will get ourselves moving.” Looking up at Ark, she asked again, “And you are certain Tor and Mahon will be all right left here to their own devices? We won’t come home to a kitchen meltdown or anything like that?”

“Well,” his expression stayed flat for a time before he grinned. “Nah, they’ll be fine. They can both cook rather well. While Mahon has issue with the barbecue, he can bake like nobody’s business. Torben can’t boil water to save his life, but he can make casseroles and barbecue like a dream. They will survive and since you won’t be there, I seriously doubt they’ll be worried about vegetables and such during the duration of this mess. Now the office,” he rolled his eyes. “It will likely survive a little better without me there. I’m usually the one who sends the temps packing. But really, if they weren’t so incompetent I wouldn’t get so upset with them. Like really, who in their right mind tries to fax a cup of coffee? Not likely what she was doing but because she was a ditz, she fried it right out with her morning java.”

“Damn, sounds like you guys went through some real winners in your time with temps. Good thing you have me now, right?” she teased him. She had to tease because if not, she would cry and it wasn’t a suitable option in her books. At all. “Well they will be able to handle the new recruits, I hope. Besides, in my opinion I have the best guy to go on this pseudo-honeymoon with right now?”

“I happen to think so,” he chuckled. “But I’m sure the others would have said the same thing had they been here. And honestly, I’m probably a

little biased in my opinion. But all I can say is, I'm here, they're not. Suckers." He shot her a big grin as he pulled into the drive leading up to the house. Parking the truck, he got out and waved a hand to the cops. "The doors are open, go on in," he told them.

She went in ahead of him and up to his room where her clothes were intermeshed with his. It was nice actually, he had given her space in his closet and drawers for her things, and she loved it. "Okay do you have a suitcase or something for us to pack all our things into?"

"Uh, we'll take two. I know you womenfolk. You always say you can manage with one but we'll end up with two anyway. So we'll start with two and we'll have lots of space for everything." He slipped past her into the closet and pulled two cases off the shelf. "You can have the big one and any overflow you can toss into the smaller one with my stuff. Just make sure your bottles of goop and shit are in a bag so they don't leak."

Rolling her eyes, Goldie pulled out her clothes and began to pack. "What should I pack for?" she asked mid stride. "Hot, cold, snow, rain? This way I don't have to pack a whole lot of nothing for no reason?"

"Pack for our weather, but take a few items for chillier nights. We won't need winter jackets or anything like that, not like we're going to the South Pole. But take a couple pairs of good socks, a sweater or two and some flannel pants in case the nights are cooler. Other than that," he shrugged. "I'll keep you warm if need be."

"And I do so love how you keep me warm," Goldie said softly. "All right. I got this. You go and do your thing and I will pack my things." Turning away from him once more, she began packing everything she would need, sliding down the banister to the kitchen and grabbing Ziploc baggies for her shampoo, conditioner, body wash and moisturizer. When her case was packed, she pulled off a couple of pillows, one from Torben's side, and one from Mahon's side, and tossed them in the case as well. Zipping it up, she nodded. "All right, I'm ready."

"Did you just steal the pillowcases?" he asked with a chuckle. He'd been sitting in a chair for the last half hour waiting on her to finish flitting around and packing, his head back. "You do realize they are going to be grumpy when they come home and find them gone right? Course they'll likely just go and sleep in their rooms instead since we'll not be here."

"Nope, I took their pillows." she confessed with a grin. "And they won't be grumpy, they will know it was me. I like smelling my guys around me

when I sleep, and since I have the real thing in you, I am settling for second best for them. So, I took their pillows.” Made sense to her.

“Guess it works,” he said, lifting his head up to look at her. “So, you’re done?” he asked. At her nod, he got up and moved to shut the other case and grab them both. “Then we should get moving. You have your vitamins and all that fun stuff?” he asked as they headed for the stairs.

“Yep, I have everything I should need for the next however long we will be gone.” Goldie looked at him and took a deep breath. “And you’re sure I’m worth all this?” her worry and concern was clear in her voice as she whispered those words to him. “Worth this big fat mess I seem to have brought into your lives?”

He dropped everything, whirled, caught her, and had her back plastered to the door, with his body holding her there faster than she could suck in her next breath. “You are worth everything, Goldie. Don’t even think about running off on your own. That will just piss me off and babe—you really do not want to have a pissed off bear on your ass. I love you. Completely, fully and would walk through the pits of Hell for you naked without a drop of water. So enough. When you have doubts know, we love and adore you. And if that isn’t enough, just hug me, woman. You know, as well as I do, a hug fucking solves a lot.”

Goldie didn’t even speak. She nodded and hugged him. Wrapping both her arms and legs around him. Pressing her face against his neck, she whispered, “I love you, Ark. So much. I wasn’t going to leave you; I don’t think I ever could. I just, I was worried you would leave me,” she admitted.

“Never, love, you are my every breath and heartbeat. God woman, without you I’d never survive,” he whispered against her ear. “I could no more leave you than I could give up my bear. So get that thought out of your head too.”

“Fair enough.” She looked up at him and nodded. “I just hope Tor and Mahon are okay with the fact I really want you to marry me legally when the time comes and them in a civil ceremony. You don’t think they will be too upset, do you?” She loved them all, but her Arkadios was the one to hold her heart just a smidge tighter.

“I doubt they will be upset, but you can put the question to them when we get back. And we will be back, that’s a promise,” he smiled down at her. Pressing a kiss to her lips, he stepped back and held her as she regained her balance on her feet. “For now though, we really need to get moving.”

“Yes. Okay let’s get moving.” She took another breath and nodded. “We will use this for practice. Practice on being on our honeymoon.” It was something she was hopeful they would have for real one day.

“After you,” he said, opening the door. Grabbing the bags, he followed her out to the truck. After tossing everything in the back, Ark moved over to talk to one of their watchers. Nodding, he pulled out his phone and they talked for a little longer while he appeared to be typing in something. A few minutes later, he slid behind the wheel. “Got his number in case we end up separated since it’s going to be rush hour when we head through the city. We’d apparently normally avoid it but he wants to ensure that if we do have a tail, they’re just as stuck and maybe show themselves.”

“Smart move,” she said as she got into the car and buckled up once more. “Well let’s hope it will be that easy. Hopefully they will slip up and then the whole thing can be avoided?” She was dreaming and knew it, but a girl could hope, right?

“We can hope but unless we have all of them under wraps, it’s not going to happen. And I seriously doubt that even if we catch one, the others will just show up to be arrested. These guys have all gone off their rockers. No sane man shoots at anyone, especially with a child present, if all their faculties are still operating at full power.”

“True.” Taking a deep breath, she rubbed her temples. “Damn it I hate this. I hate this is all happening. Why in the hell did they have to go off the deep end like that? I mean seriously? Freaking idiots.” They were more than idiots. They were insane monsters.

“No one can say why someone snaps like this, Goldie. But you do know, it isn’t your fault right?” He looked at her as they left the property and headed the opposite way from their usual route. “You can’t shoulder the blame for what thoughts go through another’s head or for their actions.”

“I know and I’m trying to keep that in mind but it’s hard. I keep seeing you hurt, and Lil J pulled into it. It’s just not good. I hate they have taken this from us. Taken the happiness we deserve and I hate to admit this, but I hope you or one of the boys find them and tear them limb from limb and bury their bodies in the woods. After all, a bear can’t be held accountable for killing someone, right?”

“Bears don’t tend to bury their prey, babe,” he said with a grin on his face. “And you have turned into one seriously blood thirsty female. Not that I mind but, quite frankly, you’re starting to scare me a little. Makes me

wonder what you'll do to one of us if we piss you off badly enough, which then has me cringing and ensuring my will is up to date." He shot her a toothy grin. "Besides all that, if there's a rogue bear on the loose the locals tend to get up in arms and go out hunting for it."

"Don't worry, I would never, ever do anything that would hurt you guys," she admitted to him and sighed. "Well crap. I don't want anyone hunting for you guys. Maybe take them several counties away so we can kill them?" Yes, she was bloodthirsty, but these men had shattered her illusions of safety and to her, that meant they needed to die.

"Well there is that, or we could just have them thrown in jail for the rest of their miserable lives. Given how they act in public, do you really think they'd survive long in prison without making friends with someone? And by friends, I do mean the closest of friends, bunkmates even."

"I'm just worried something will happen and honestly I'm not so sure the judicial system will hold up," she whispered. "That is my biggest fear. I know I shouldn't have the worry but I do."

"I know love, me too. But one way or another, they will face justice, either by your people or by mine. And trust me, my kind are a hell of a lot less forgiving about attempted murder of a mate. That shit gets people eviscerated right quick."

"Good," she muttered. "Then we will ensure they pay for the crimes they have committed one way or another." She took a deep breath and let it out. "All right, I'm dropping it now because if not I will not be a pleasant person. We will get to where we are going and enjoy this, right?"

"We will, and when the cops catch Barrett and his cronies, then we'll worry about the rest." He squeezed her hand once more and looked at her. "You could slide into the center you know instead of sitting all the way over by the door."

"Okay." She had been waiting on him to tell her to move closer instead of taking it on her own. Releasing her belt, she slid close then did herself back up again. "There, now this is better. Would be even more so if you would put your arm around me."

"So demanding," he teased her. But he did put his arm around her shoulders, pulling her in closer to him. "Why were you sitting all the way over there anyway, babe? Had to be lonely and boring there. Hell, if I could have moved the steering column over I'd have snuggled right up to you. So,

why were you perched over there ignoring the very obvious option of snuggling up to me?"

"Because I was worried about you not being able to fully concentrate, or some such nonsense like that," she muttered. "Honestly I don't know why I was sitting all the way over there. I think I just was so godsmacked by what's happening I didn't think of it."

"Well that's fine I suppose," he gave her a squeeze. "Next time just sidle on over and get cozy. I much prefer having you close than so far away from me. I love you, Goldie and, for a while at least, I'm going to be glued to your side, tight."

"Good. I doubt I will be able to stay far from you, except when I have to pee. Sorry, still a little shy on some things."

"Darling, that much I already know. We've been living together for only a little while, but that lesson was learned fast one day. Mainly with the bum rush from the bathroom, and then the door being slammed on my nose."

"True." She had the decency to at least blush at slamming the door in his face. "I just I can't pee when someone is listening or watching. It's why I have such a sucky time with drug tests, I've got a shy bladder."

"You live with three guys who really are not all that shy. You should retrain your bladder, babe," he said with a chuckle. Rubbing his hand over her arm, he gave her a squeeze. "Cause you know eventually you're going to have to give in and pee in front of at least one of us."

"Ha, that's what you think," she muttered. "I mean it. No way in hell will I pee in front of any of you. I will find a way away from you guys somehow."

"Oh, you will one day," he grinned at her. "I will place good money on that. Even if it's out of sheer desperation, you will. Not today, not tomorrow, but I'm betting it's coming. Hundred bucks says you'll do it sometime in the future, under five years."

"No way in hell," Goldie said with a shake of her head. "The bet is on like Donkey Kong. No way in hell will I ever, ever pee in front of you guys. I do not pee in front of other people, period. Never gonna happen, big boy."

"We shall see," he teased. For the next several hours they drove. Stopping only twice, once for a pee break at her demand, and the other for caffeine at his demand. Finally, though they reached the cabin, none too soon given how she was dancing in her seat. Arkadios was chuckling as he

got out and handed her the keys. “Go in. It’s down the hall to the right near the back door. But don’t flush until I’ve gotten everything going.”

“Thank heavens.” She grabbed the keys and took off like lightning. “Don’t take long,” she called over her shoulder as she made for the bathroom. After a time, she came out and leaned against the doorframe. “All right, can I flush and wash my hands now?” She hoped so.

“Yes, you can use the water. It’s all on now. Just start it slow, there may be air in the pipes. I tried to clear it, so don’t turn it on high right off, you’ll end up drenching yourself,” he smiled. “Go, do your thing, I’m going to start something for us to eat.”

“Sounds good,” she said with a grin. Moving back to the bathroom, she turned on the water and turned it on low. She then flushed the toilet and waited for a moment to wash up. “Oh God, this water stinks.” It smelled like rotten eggs, seriously not a good smell in the least.

“Let it run for a while, we haven’t be up here in way too long, so it’s just stagnant. It’ll clear in a few,” he said walking around the corner. He held up some wet naps, “For the immediate issue. There’s also some antibacterial hand stuff in the kitchen if you want that on top of it all.”

“Thank you.” She kissed his cheek after taking the wet naps. “You are truly a God among men,” she teased him with a smile. “Always knowing what I need, and want even before I do. I happen to love that about you. You are amazing, Arkadios.”

“Just trying to keep you happy so you don’t notice I have no clue what I’m doing,” he smiled back. Winking, he turned and headed back up the short hall. “The cops are here as well, just so you don’t have the sudden urge to strip naked.”

That had her grinning and she shook her head. “Honey, you have more than a clue. You do very well at keeping me happy. You are amazing, so shush it.” Hell, she had forgotten all about the cops. “All right. No stripping. I will try to keep myself in check.”

“I’m sure they would appreciate it,” he said, laughter in his voice. There was softer talk and a bit of laughter as dishes were bumped about. “Babe, you feeling up for some chili? I have some garlic bread I can toast up to go with it.”

“Oh that sounds wonderful. And you know me; I can always go for food. So feed me.”

Grinning at her, he handed her a beer. "Grab a seat for a bit, it'll take about ten to warm everything up," he said. Leaning in, he kissed her gently. "I think we made the cops uncomfortable," he said in a low tone, an evil grin on his face.

"I think so too, but I honestly don't care." When she was with her men, they were all that mattered. For a moment, Ark had her forgetting that some insane asshole was after her to kill her. So yeah, she really didn't care.

"Kind of figured, thus the warning I gave you about the impromptu company we have," he smiled and chuckled. "Grab a chair, and keep me company while I try not to blow us up on this relic," he turned to the stove. "I really need to get a new one out here," he muttered. There was some clicking, a light of a match, and then he ducked. Ducked! Followed by a loud whoosh of sound.

"Sounds good." She watched him and grinned. Then the gas whooshed to life with the strike of the match, Goldie lost her grin and nearly tumbled backward herself. "Holy shit. Ark, are you okay?" She was checking him to ensure he hadn't hurt himself. "Yes, I really think you need to get a new one out here soon."

"I'll live, I've learned to duck with this beast," he said. Catching her hands, he pulled her close. "I'm good, darling," he said softly, wrapping her up in his arms. "I do love when you worry about me, but there really isn't a need for it in this particular case."

"You know I will always worry for you, Arkadios. You are my heart, my love. I will forever worry about you just as you will me." She wrapped her arms around him as well and grinned as she pressed her cheek to his chest. "How long until we can go to bed?" she teasingly asked.

"Uh, well, we should have dinner first; and maybe discuss the game plan with the cops. Then, and only then, can we go to bed? There are three bedrooms here, so our guests will have a place to use they can rest. We have enough food we won't need to hit a shop any time soon, thankfully. Other than that," he shrugged. "It's going to be a few boring days."

"Sounds good to me. I can handle a boring few days." Bring it on! She was ready. "Just don't bitch at me when I start to want to play strip poker or something. Just not any board games. Cards I'm great with, but I might hit you over the head if you want to play Monopoly or something like that."

"Not even Snakes and Ladders?" he asked with a pout. Then he chuckled, "No board games, promise. We don't exactly have a great

selection here since my sister refuses to let me bring Josie up here. I think she's afraid I'll turn her into one of us, beer guzzling, belching, ass-scratching, heathens."

Goldie could only laugh. "God, you are too funny. First off, that child could never, ever turn out to be anything she didn't want to be. She's far too much like you for that. She's totally and completely her own girl and I love her for that. Secondly, none of you are ass-scratching heathens. Belching yes, but I don't think I've ever seen a single one of you digging your asses." She leaned in and whispered, "Especially not when you are all far too fascinated by mine."

"Yours is extremely cute and all the possibilities that come to mind when it comes into view." Arkadios let out a low whistle and shook his head. "It's surely a sin to have an ass that damned fine," he smiled.

That had her grinning and she winked. "Well you know how it is." She pulled back from him, her hand trailing down his chest and biting her lower lip. "Damn you are a handsome man. And honey, if my ass is fine then yours is plain made of gold or something because it's a thing of art, and I love squeezing it."

Snorting, he shook his head at her looking embarrassed. Which, given the chuckles from the other room, he might be with the cops laughing at the statement. "I think you need to sit down so I can heat up dinner. Otherwise, we're going to starve and they are going to get a show in sex education the likes of which is not offered in school."

"Good point," she muttered and looked over her shoulder. "And I don't think they deserve the kind of show that we would give." She stepped back. "So go ahead and heat up the food. I promise I will try to be good."

"Drink your beer and try not to look so damned sexy, woman. It's seriously a crime to look like you do." He paused; shot her a considering look and then began to smile. "I'm going to have to have a wee little chat with our cop friends methinks. I have a wonderful idea and they have the supplies required for it."

Goldie frowned, "Okay, what is your so wonderful mind came up with?" She wanted to know. "Because you have a look on your face that tells me you can't wait to get them doing whatever it is you want them to do."

"Nope," he smirked and set the large pot onto the burner. "Not sharing just now," he told her with a grin. Whistling softly, he collected a spoon,

stuck it into the pot, and then moved to set bread slices onto a baking tray that may, or may not have, been pre-Civil War era.

“Oh you are so bad,” she grumbled and took her seat once more, crossing her legs, and watching him. “I hope whatever it is, will get us some alone time?” She had no idea what the big man was planning but it would be delicious whatever it was if the look on his face was any indication.

“Oh it will. Lots and lots of it. You may disapprove slightly, but I’m sure we’ll get around it.” He winked over his shoulder before sliding the tray into the ancient beast of an oven. Moving to the cupboards, he pulled down bowls and plates setting them onto the counter.

That had her frowning and she asked, “Please tell me you don’t want to take me camping.” She loved camping but honestly, she loved a nice warm bed even better. “Because if so, you and I are going to have to have a chat.”

“Babe, we are as close to camping as I’ll likely ever take you. With your aversion to peeing in front of anyone, I’d hate to take you somewhere you’d have to pee in front of a squirrel or a bird. You’d bloody well explode before we got you to a real bathroom.”

“This is very true.” Well, kinda. Since she knew that not all animals in the forest were actually animals, this was very much true. Damn. “Okay, so camping is totally out for me. Now that I know what I know, I will never be able to pee outdoors again.”

“Kind of figured,” he said with a chuckle. Shaking his head at her, he stirred the pot. “That’s why I didn’t suggest we go into the middle of the woods for our hideout. It would have been good but somehow, the idea of building you a port-a-potty out there was a little too much for even me.”

She grinned and nodded. “And that’s kinda what I would have needed.” She watched him as he moved and she added, “Besides, sleeping in a nice comfy bed will be totally good for us. Being able to get up and down, naked as the day, we were born. I like the idea.”

“Just no wandering around naked. I’d really hate to have to find a place to hide the three bodies of the law enforcement group we have. Not that I couldn’t but really, it’s such a hassle. The ground here is so hard, packed clay, it’s a bitch to try to dig through.”

“Don’t worry, only in our bedroom will I wander around naked,” she told him simply. “Trust me, you are the only one I want seeing me naked.” Sighing, she asked, “Do you think they will be okay? Do you think the cops are right about it?” About this ass wanting her, not them?

“Mostly,” he said quietly, his voice low so the cops wouldn’t hear. “Either way, Torben and Mahon will be on the lookout. They won’t be letting their guards down, and they will have a cop at the house and the office to help. We just have to hope your old boss saw us packing and heading out, or hears through the grapevine that we did. That way he’ll be looking for us instead of harassing them.”

“Good,” she said quietly and nodded. “I just really, really hope he will come for us.” She hated to admit that, but it was the truth. “I would love it if this were to end soon, but we will take however long we need for us to get through this, right?”

“Absolutely,” he picked up a beer bottle, his obviously, and walked closer. “No matter what happens, we’re together in this and we will see him in jail or dead.” Holding his bottle, top toward her he lifted his brow. “We’re a unit,” he said quietly.

“Yes we are. We will always be stronger together. You and me, we fit. I love that about us,” she told him honestly. “There is no one I would rather be with.” He could see the truth on her face. She couldn’t hide it. Though she loved Torben and Mahon, Arkadios had a little something extra that made her cling to him tighter, hold him closer.

Bumping his bottleneck to hers, he grinned. “I know. I am the best looking one out of the gang after all. And you like my ass, so it’s a plus,” he chuckled softly. Leaning in, he kissed her softly and sucked on her lip gently.

“Yes, I happen to really love your ass. I love everything about you.” The gentle kiss did her in. It had her leaning into him with her hand on his neck. Against his lips she whispered, “God, I love you, Arkadios. Never forget that you hold my heart.”

“And you hold mine,” he whispered. Pressing a kiss to her lips, he pulled back reluctantly and moved to the pot once more.

Chapter Thirteen

It took three weeks, four days, and roughly, six hours before the word came in that her former boss and his cohorts had been arrested. She and Arkadios were coming in from a walk when the cops had come to meet them and give them the news. Apparently, Barrett had paid out a bunch of money, borrowed even more, all in the search for her. He had figured out she'd disappeared, not because he'd seen them leave, but because he'd been watching the house and not seen her or Ark come back.

That and the cops staying there had been a good clue. In the end, a loan shark had helped the cops out. By breaking one of Barrett's kneecaps for failing to pay in a timely manner, the loan shark had kept the man in town. He'd ended up having to go to the emergency room with his two friends, and into surgery. When he'd come out, he'd been greeted with the warrant for his arrest and a pair of handcuffs to keep him on the bed until he recovered enough to be moved to lock up.

They were packed, the cops having left an hour ago, and Arkadios was just waiting on her to do her final walk through of the cabin. For three weeks, it had been her home, and she'd spread out a bit. Understandable, even with near strangers living there with them, she'd made it a home for the time they'd been there. The heat on her back warned her, her bear was close. "You ready, love?" he asked, sliding his arms around her body and drawing her back against his.

Leaning back into him, Goldie ran her hands over his arms at her waist. Baring her neck to him, she smiled. "I am." She was ready to get home to Torben and Mahon, ready to sleep with all three of her bears once more. The last few days she had been waking in the middle of the night because of being cold on one side or another, the side that Arkadios couldn't keep warm. "How about you? You ready to get us home so you can share me again?" Her poor bear, she had kept him busy while they were there. Walks, talks, swims, and making love. She had ensured their hours were filled fully and completely, and she likely exhausted the poor guy because of it.

"I suppose," he said, running his lips over her neck. "I've kind of liked having you all to myself. Even when you were running me ragged," he chuckled. Giving her a squeeze, he nipped at her throat and loosened his

hold. "Let's get the truck loaded up and then we'll hit the road. We'll take a slightly quicker route home since we don't need to worry about being tailed. Should get us there before dinner."

"It has been nice hasn't it? I have loved this time. You made me forget why we were here, which was very impressive in and of itself." Touching his cheek, she turned in his arms and wrapped hers around him to hug him. "Can we do this again? Sometime maybe take a weekend just to be together?"

"Of course we can," he said softly. "Go and hit the little girls' room once more. Then I'll turn the water off and we'll drain the pipes. While you're doing that, I'll check the other lines and make sure everything is off." Leaning in, he kissed her gently.

"Sounds good." Ah yes, she did have to go once more. Goldie came out five minutes later. Moving back to Arkadios, she grinned. "All right, what do I need to do in order to help you out in draining the pipes or what not?"

"The water is off now so go and open the tap in the bathroom sink. Just a bit until all you hear is air. Then close it, wait for a count of ten, and open it a bit again. Sometimes the backpressure of the air will push more water out, that's what we want. When I give you a holler, tighten the taps, flush the toilet, wait for the bowl to fill, and flush again."

Tapping her hand to his chest, she nodded. "Sounds good. See you in a moment," she said with a laugh and took off for the bathroom, turning the tap on in the bathroom sink. Five minutes later Goldie was walking out of the bathroom and then moved to Arkadios. Slipping her hand into his, she gave him a squeeze. "I'm ready, honey. Take me home?"

"Yes ma'am," he smiled at her. "We should call them when we're a couple hours out and have them fire up the grill and throw on some steaks. I could kill, literally, for some serious meat after the last few weeks. I'm sorry, darling, but the chicken just ain't cutting it any more. I need steaks, big and juicy, bloody after barely touching flame."

She laughed and winked at him. "Well I told you we could totally do steaks, but it was the cops that wouldn't let you go into town and get them. So, blame them, not me. You also could have shifted and went out hunting you know."

"Yeah, but I hated leaving you for more than a few minutes at a time. Especially with this whole mess going on," he said softly. Pressing a kiss to

her lips, he drew back, “Alright, let’s lock up and get out of here. The sooner we hit the road the sooner we can get home and have steaks.”

“That sounds good to me. So the guys know we are on the way home too, right?” she asked hopefully. “Because if not, I think we should surprise them or something. Just to be mean or tease them.” Ha, she just wanted to be able to catch them naked and he knew that.

“They know we’re free to come home, they were given the same info we were. I haven’t told them we were going to be back today though. So if you’d rather surprise them we could,” he said as they went room-to-room checking windows. At the front door, he shut it and turned the lock. After a couple of shakes to ensure it was solid, he turned to her. “But that means delaying steaks,” he threw on a pout, even had his lower lip quivering.

That had her snickering and she shook her head. “I wouldn’t dare do that to you. I know how much you love your steaks so we will go home. Get there as fast as we can. Surprising them isn’t necessary because we both know they have missed us bunches already.”

“You, maybe, me not so much,” he said with a shrug. Moving to the truck, he helped her inside before joining her. Getting them on the road, he looked to her. “I’m pretty sure we’ll get there and I won’t see you for about a week. Or them, now that I think about it. I think we should reconsider this going home thing,” he chuckled and shot her a grin.

That had her laughing and she shook her head. “Well they have missed a lot, so I’m sure they will want to try to catch up and all that fun stuff.” Or something. “They will want to do more than catch up. I seriously doubt they will be asking many questions. At least not until a few days after,” he told her. He was grinning, yeah he knew what Torben and Mahon would be doing for those first few days. “It’s a good thing they managed to find a semi-decent temp for the office. You won’t be working or in any condition to work for a few days I’m thinking.”

“Oh, believe me, I know. I’m ready and waiting. I am very happy there was a good and decent temp for them while we were gone. Hopefully when I finally do make it to work I won’t have a hot fire mess happening around me.” She shrugged and then added, “If so I am totally making those guys help me clean it up.”

“As long as I’m not dragged into the mess,” he said with a chuckle. “Just remember, I will help, but I wasn’t the one to cause the mess in the

first place. We don't know there is. But given how those two seem to work, I'd lay odds something has gone totally awry at some point."

"That's fine. I will just make them help me. I can't blame the poor temp for the mess, but I can blame those guys. I'm sure that if there is one it's because they were being the grumpy bears they are." Especially since, they weren't getting sex on a regular basis.

"Just making sure," he smiled at her. Then he shot her a look and frowned. "Woman, what are you doing sitting all the way over there? I thought we established you should be right next to me when we are driving?"

That had her laughing and she moved over to sit right at his side as close as she could get. "Is this better?" She knew she liked it a great deal better. "Now then, I think your arm belongs around me and holding me close? Because you and I both know when we get home, there will be no separating those guys from me and you will have to handle the office alone for a time."

"Sad, but so damned true," he muttered. Leaning sideways, he worked his arm around her and held on tight before relaxing his hold. "I'm sorry this took so long, Goldie. We've been gone so long I'm worried this may have," he stopped and she caught his frown. "Hell, I'm worried this might have damaged our relationship as a group. I'm hoping I'm wrong, but I want you to be aware there may be some tension that wasn't there before."

"It's okay. It took as long as it had to take." Leaning her head against his shoulder, she closed her eyes. "I hope you are wrong, Arkadios. I do. I love you, I love you so very much, but I love Mahon and Torben too. I just pray it doesn't."

"Just go along with whatever they want for a while. They're going to likely be feeling antsy," he said softly. "We've been gone a while so you go in when we get there and I'll try to blend into the background for a time. They'll likely be more than a little possessive of you for a time, reaffirming their bond with you and all that fun bear stuff."

"I'm sure eventually they will want all four of us to reaffirm the bond but yes, I can see them being more than a little possessive for a time." She simply wanted to be there with them again. She had missed Tor and Mahon so very much while they had been in hiding. Sadly, she would likely not let them go for a time either.

“Maybe, maybe not. I have a feeling we’ll see one another in passing for a while,” he chuckled. “Don’t worry, I’ll survive. You’ll be walking damn funny though. Bet on that,” he teased, giving her a little squeeze.

That had her laughing and she nodded, “Oh I’m sure. But you know,” looking up at him she rubbed her lips to his neck. “I really don’t mind. I happen to really love those guys and I can’t wait to have them loving me as well.”

“A few hours and we’ll be there,” he said pressing a kiss to her temple. Holding her to him, he rested his cheek on her hair for a time as he drove. They fell into silence, comfortable and relaxed as he drove them back home.

Goldie’s eye began to drift closed and she yawned. “I am going to miss you,” she whispered. “I might have to hunt you down from time to time,” she told him quietly. “I don’t think I will be able to go a great deal of time without having you holding me, kissing me, touching me.”

“I’m not going anywhere. I’ll be there, just not so prominently. Do I want to keep you all to myself? Yes, I said it. But I also know we’re not the only two people in this relationship, and I can’t be that selfish. I’ve had you to myself for three weeks, it’s their turn now for a little time with you, just you.”

“Thank you for that.” She looked up at him and smiled. “I will have to have someone take me to the doctor next week. It’s getting time for my shot to be administered, and I don’t know if any of us are ready for a little bear or three running around yet.” She wanted babies, but she didn’t want them yet. “If that’s okay?” She didn’t know what her men thought about that idea though.

“It’s your body, and if you’d like to wait for a little longer, have some more time with us, I’m good with that. I just want you to be happy, Goldie. But when you are ready for kids, I’m more than ready any time. I love kids, probably why I let Josie paint her room that eye searing color,” he muttered the last under his breath.

That had her smiling and she nodded. “Yeah that color is definitely one for the record books. It’s a gawd awful color, but then she looks at you and you can’t tell her no. You can’t be upset with her either. That girl is too sweet and too amazing by half to have any hard feelings at all.”

“What you actually mean, but are too nice to say is, she knows how to fucking manipulate us, and she’s good at it. She knows what she wants and

no matter what, she'll twist us around her little finger until she has it."

"And you guys certainly let her. It's all good though, she's a sweetheart, and she even twists and turns me to have me doing what she wants as well. I adore that kid to the moon and back, and would do just about anything I could for her. I'm happy she's a part of our lives. Very much so."

"Well, like I mentioned before, she's our practice kid. I figure we can use her to get an idea of how to be parents. Plus, if we screw up, we call in her mother to fix her," he grinned. "Though I have learned one thing, ice cream fixes a lot in a female's life, no matter the age."

"Yes, this is very true. Ice cream is a marvelous fix-it-all when it comes to women." Goldie loved ice cream and it made her smile that Josie loved it too. "And sparklies. Sometimes a woman's sad can be fixed by sparklies."

"Right, sparklies," Ark shot her a look. Then chuckling, he shook his head at her. "Woman, you don't have to be so subtle you know. Just tell me straight out whatever you'd like and I'll get it for you. You know I'm good for it. Hell, I even got you one, now that I think about it," he told her.

"Check the glove box for the box with the little bow."

That surprised her. "How?" she asked and opened the glove box. Her hands were shaking. "When did you have time to get me something?" Her lips were dry, her mouth dry and her hands were shaking. "Ark, is this something you need to wait to give me?" It could be either a ring or earrings with the size of the box.

"Depends," he said, taking it from her. He tossed it up and down a couple of times before throwing the little box into the back seat. "You're right, it can wait for now. You'll probably not like it anyway," he shrugged. "Too bad I went and, oops, not telling you that. Then you'll know just what it is."

Goldie looked at him with wide eyes. "Oh no." She shifted, "I want that," she demanded. She then climbed over the seat and grabbed the box. "You can't tell me that and then toss it in the backseat. I mean it." She snagged the box and then settled at his side once more. "Now, what is in it? Something we need to stop for?"

Ark shot her a look and then glanced around before he pulled over onto the shoulder. Throwing the truck into park, he undid his seatbelt, hit the four-way blinkers, and turned to face her. "It's likely safer if we are stopped when you open it. As I said, you may not like it, or you may. And since you

tend to get enthusiastic in your responses, no matter what they are, definitely safer. Open it.”

With shaky hands, Goldie opened the box. What she saw there however had her gasping. “Holy shit,” she couldn’t help herself from saying. “That is.” She looked at him with tears in her eyes. “Oh God.” She couldn’t seem to get words to form. Instead, she was sputtering and licked her lips. “What do you want to ask?” She had to know. Needed to know.

“I want to say something first so take a breath, please.” He reached out with a chuckle and rubbed her back gently. “Before this whole hiding in the woods bit started, the guys and I talked. I told them what I wanted to do and they agreed, so you don’t need to worry how this will affect them. And, now that I have the disclaimer out of the way,” he said quietly. Sliding his hand down her arm, he lifted her hand and kissed her fingers. “Goldie, love of my life, will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?”

Goldie looked at him and licked her lips. “Yes,” she whispered. “Yes, I will marry you. Yes, I want to be with you. Yes, I need forever,” she told him and smiled. “I love you, Arkadios. God, I love you so very much and I want this with you.” There was no hesitation at all. “And you are sure the guys are okay with this? They will want this forever with us being married?”

“They are planning a little something at the house, just for the family to give you something similar to a wedding. Since there can legally only be one of us wed to you they want to do a civil like ceremony. We’re bonded, it means more to us than marriage, but we know for you and your family and friends, a wedding will mean more and sit easier with them.”

“Thank you for that,” she said with a grin. “I want to have them as well. Maybe we can do some sort of a marriage certificate for all of us?” she asked happily. “I think that it’s very possible to do.” She rubbed her cheek to his. “God I love you, Ark, a hundred times over.”

Chuckling, he hugged her to him and pressed a kiss to her neck. With a small bite of his teeth, he pulled back and pulled the ring from the box. Lifting her hand, he slid it on before dropping a kiss to her finger. “Whether you wear it when we get home or not is up to you.”

“I am totally wearing it.” She touched it once more and then frowned. “I’ve never seen anything like this before. It’s stunning, Arkadios. Where in the world did you find this ring? I love it,” she admitted. “I don’t think I have ever seen anything this perfect and this beautiful before.”

“And you’ll never see another like it anywhere,” he said. Grinning, he leaned back against his door to watch her. “For one, it’s handmade. For another, it was designed by me in my spare time. Mostly doodles, but the artist I hired got the gist and drew something that didn’t look like Frankenstein’s experiments. When I signed off on it, all I had to do was pick the stones I wanted and leave it in her very capable hands.”

“Are you serious?” She was beyond surprised. “You designed this? Holy crap, for real? Wow.” God, she loved it. “Honey, this is amazing. I can’t even begin to tell you just how much this means to me. Not only is this a beautiful ring, but one that you made for me. Amazing.”

“The term *designed*, might be a bit too strong. I doodled out an idea and gave it to someone with vision to create it. I knew what I wanted but the artist definitely helped make it come true. She made me tell her all about you, your likes, dislikes, your laugh, your morning routine of all things and what I loved most about you. Apparently it worked because she showed me that when it was done and I was ready to burst.”

“It’s perfect. I don’t think a more perfect ring ever could have been created. I love it. So very much,” she whispered. “You did really good with this, babe.” She touched it again and shook her head, tears sliding down her face. “I love it. I love the love that was included in the making of the ring.”

Smiling, he leaned in to kiss her gently. “No more crying, love,” he said softly. With gentle fingers, he wiped at her cheeks. Hugging her to him, he gave her a squeeze before settling into place again and putting on his seatbelt. “Not exactly how I planned to ask you, but I wasn’t exactly having a lot of luck at the cabin either.”

“I’m trying but goodness it’s so beautiful.” She looked up at him and smiled. “Honey, it is perfect. It doesn’t matter where we are, as long as we are together. It’s right,” she told him with a grin. “Love you, babe.” She leaned in and kissed him again. “Now, let’s get home.”

Winking, he put the truck into gear again. Once he had them on the highway, once more he slipped his arm around her shoulders. “I love you too, Goldie. I know I never say it enough, but I do. The ring, that’s just a physical reminder of how much I love and adore you.”

“I know you do,” she whispered. “I know you love me, honey.” She shrugged. “And I love you, too. See, life is totally good. Right?” She moved close to him once more and rubbed her cheek to his chest. “I know I tell you all the time but you know I do and that is why I tell you so often.”

“I know, darling,” he said softly. He pressed a kiss to her hair and gave her a squeeze. Once more, they fell into a comfortable silence as he drove. His hand slid up and down her arm slowly, pausing now and again before continuing. She could practically hear him thinking. What he was thinking on, she didn’t know and couldn’t even guess.

Goldie had drifted into a light sleep as they drove, her excitement wearing her nerves far thinner than she would have thought and sleep capturing her in her moment of downtime. She hadn’t thought she would have fallen asleep on him, but she did, soundly.

Chapter Fourteen

“Goldie, come on sleeping beauty, open those gorgeous eyes,” Ark’s voice called to her through her sleep-muddled mind. “We’re home, baby, and about to be attacked any second. I think one of them spotted us so you need to sit up and prepare for the barrage of male attention coming your way.” A finger slid down her cheek, “Wakey, wakey, babe.”

Goldie smiled and leaned into Ark’s finger. “Then give me a kiss if I’m not going to have another from you for the next few hours.” And she knew she wouldn’t. It had been a damn long time away from her men and they all wanted, needed so very much more. “Kiss me, and then move aside so you aren’t trampled,” she teased.

Leaning in, he kissed her slowly, deeply, gently. His hand cupped her face, his mouth moved over hers and the growl he gave shuddered through her body. A moment later the truck rocked as the door was yanked open. “Go,” he said quietly, letting her loose.

“Love you,” she whispered against his mouth only a moment before she was tugged to Mahon by her ankle. Grinning, she wrapped her arms and legs around him. “I missed you, too,” she told him quietly and rubbed her cheek to his. “So much.” She felt how much he had missed her. “I really think we need to get nekkid. In fact, I know we do.” Sooner rather than later. Hell, right there against the truck for all she cared. She just needed them.

“Never fucking again,” Torben said, cupping her cheek. Leaning in, he kissed her, hard, desperately. Then Mahon was carrying her toward the house. Apparently, a bed, or some sort of furniture, was in her near future. As she went into the house, she saw Ark grabbing bags from the truck but not looking her way. Then her view was cut off and Mahon was moving faster, racing up the stairs quickly with Torben right on his heels.

Goldie grinned, reaching down and peeling her shirt off, tossing it to the floor and following it with her bra. “Never again,” she agreed. “I’m never leaving any of you behind again.” She knew why they had done it, it had honestly been the best decision, but she had missed them as much as they had missed her.

Mahon set her on her feet and yanked at her pants. "Off, now," he said softly, a growl in his voice. Torben was already mostly naked, not that either man had a lot of clothing on. Mahon stepped back and yanked his shirt off, going to work on his fly as Torben started stalking closer.

She didn't even hesitate. She pushed her pants off quickly and kicked her shoes off randomly. As soon as Torben approached her, she didn't hesitate. She flew into his arms and pulled his head to hers to kiss him. Her eager hands moved down his chest and captured his erection. With desperation, she began to stroke him. Wanting so very much more.

Growling at her, Torben cupped her ass and took her to the bed, rolling with her until she landed on top. Sucking on her lip, he rocked his cock into her hands, the noises coming from his chest feral and rough. His hands squeezed her ass as he assaulted her mouth, barely letting her up for air.

Goldie was so wet she knew he could feel it. Rubbing her pussy against his upper thigh, she moaned into his mouth. She pulled back finally though and licked her lips. "I need you. Now," her voice was every bit as much a growl as his had been. She had gone far too long without these two men and wanted them, no, she fucking needed them. Now.

"About fucking time," he snarled. Lifting her up, he dislodged her hand from his cock and in a swift move, impaled her on his hard flesh. A hiss left his lips as his eyes flashed back and forth between human and the bear. She felt the bed dip and then Mahon's lips were on her neck. "Lean forward, Goldie," Torben said, drawing her to him.

Goldie grinned and leaned down against Torben. "Thank fucking God." Lord, she had missed this. Being filled so completely, so totally owned by these men. "God, you feel so good." She loved the way Tor was having trouble controlling his bear; she felt the rippling under his skin as if he was shifting in and out slightly. "Hurry," she begged. "Lube, lots of lube." It had been a very long three plus weeks since she had two cocks in her at once and neither of them was small by any means.

A cold sensation on her ass had her moaning, Mahon's hand rubbing her spine. "Easy, love," he said his voice not quite as rough as Torben's. A small crash told her he'd tossed the tube aside. The rub of his cock to her ass was her only warning before he began to press into her, slow and deep.

Goldie didn't tense up. She pushed back against him instead. She felt the muscles of her ass accepting him, spreading for him. This was what she needed. A low moan escaped her when she felt him slide through the first

ring of muscles and then the second. Letting her head drop to Torben's shoulder, she licked against the side of his neck. "Fuck me," she demanded with a whisper of a sound.

"Oh darling, we fully intend to," Torben said with a feral sounding chuckle. Mahon began to move, slowly at first as both men rearranged her slightly. Then he started to pick up his pace, his hands on her hips holding her in place. Torben started to thrust a moment later, his cock sliding in and out of her slick pussy faster and in the perfect counterbalance to Mahon's cock.

Her eyes were practically crossing at just how freaking good it felt. To have these men doing this to her and the way they worked. She heard herself moaning and only did more pushing back against him repeatedly. "Hell, yes," she panted. "That feels so damn good," she moaned repeatedly.

Flesh slapped to flesh, their hands moving over her body as they squeezed, rubbed and molded her to them. Their hips moved faster, their cocks hitting deeper with each and every thrust. "God, woman," Mahon growled in her ear. Torben sat up beneath her and in an obviously coordinated move; Mahon sank his teeth into her neck as Torben bit her shoulder, right where they had before.

That was what she had missed so very much, what she had needed. This reconnection to them. She heard herself screaming, a satisfied and pleasure filled sound, only a half a second before she bit into Torben's chest and drew blood. She shuddered around them, finding her first orgasm of what would be many she was sure.

Both men gave satisfied, happy growls as they came. Their seed splashing deep into her pussy and her ass. Their arms were tight around her body as they continued to spill semen into her in long streams. They hadn't softened though, both still hard. A moment later, they released her skin and pulled from her body. A quick spin had her position reversed, Mahon sliding into her pussy and Torben easing into her ass.

Goldie looked up at both men and sighed. "I've missed this so freaking much," she muttered and lifted a leg to wrap it around Mahon, pulling him closer and tighter to her body. "I am so not going to be walking straight for a long time." Hot damn! "And I love it," she added with a happy smile.

"You won't have any need to walk for a long time. As soon as we heard you were coming back, we took a week off from the office. Cleared everything up and pushed everything back a week. You are ours for a full

week, of which there will be much sex, even more sex and on occasion, some food,” Torben informed her.

“Thank freaking God,” Goldie said with a grin. “Maybe in that week you guys will marry me.” She let her head drop and shuddered. Grinning because she felt both of them stilling. Silly men, neither of them had seen the ring on her finger.

“Not until Arkadios marries you,” Mahon said tipping her chin up. “Alpha personality has first dibs,” he added kissing her gently. “Nice ring by the way,” he grinned. Obviously, the guys were a little more relaxed, if slightly intense.

That had her grinning, “So you guys didn’t lose all that attentiveness.” Her fingers fisted into Mahon’s hair and pulled him close. “Thank you. I think it’s perfect. Now, how about you kiss me again and then later, much later, we will have a bath and then eventually start to plan our wedding. For now.” She nipped his lip. “Make me scream.”

“We did that already,” he grinned wider. “But I do love making you scream louder,” he whispered. Kissing her, he yanked her head back slightly, his hand tangled in her hair as they began to take her, thrusting harder and deeper.

“Oh, I love it as well,” she purred against his lips and let them move her body as they needed and wanted to. This was why she loved these men; they seemed to know what she needed and when she needed it. “God yes.” She bit Mahon’s lip, loving the feelings, very much.

For hours, they made love to her, marking her as theirs repeatedly. When they finally seemed to be relaxed once more, Mahon went off to get food. Torben lay there next to her, drawing lazy circles on her thigh. “You still alive?” he asked in a lazy tone, amusement back in his voice.

She was more than half-asleep when he asked that question. Yawning, she nestled in closer to him and closed her eyes again. “I love you but I think I might just have a complete break down if we did that again.” She nipped at his chest. “But heavens, I’m more than willing to try repeatedly.”

Chuckling, he rolled into her and hugged her closer. “I missed you,” he said softly. “The reports that you were fine just didn’t fucking cut it. I need to hold you, to feel the heat of your skin and to know for myself, you were fine. When I said never again, I fucking meant it.”

“So did I.” She wasn’t even coming close to teasing. She had to have them all in her life. Needed them. “I love you and Mahon as well as

Arkadios and I never, ever want to have another night where I'm away from any of you. The three of you are needed in my life, just as I am needed in yours."

He nodded against her cheek, his a little rough from stubble. "Glad we're all on the same page," he said quietly. Giving her another squeeze, he drew back a little to see her face. Lifting her hand up, he cocked a brow. "He told me about it but damn! That's one hell of a ring there," he grinned at her.

"Yeah, no kidding right? It is impressive. You guys didn't see it?" she asked with a frown. "I would have imagined you would have seen it as well." It was more than a little surprising to know he wouldn't have shown the other two. "All I know is I want and need you guys in my life, and I want to be able to have you all three married to me. If only in our hearts."

"We saw his doodles, but not the finished product. He didn't even have the designer lined up until about two weeks after you left. He had it all done up while you two were out at the cabin. He sent us a picture, but it wasn't all that great a shot given he was probably doing it on the sly when you were around."

"Wow. That's freaking impressive. How did he get the ring? Did one of the cops go and pick it up for him? He didn't leave me for more than ten to twenty minutes at a time so I have no idea when he would have been able to go for it."

Torben just grinned and shrugged, obviously he wasn't going to tell her. His next words confirmed that very clearly. "Guess you will have to just ask him how he managed it. But darling mine, you need to know something, we bears are damned smart and know how to get things done when we need to."

"Yes, I have kind of noticed that, big guy." She had noticed it all right. "You guys have a tendency to surprise me more often than not. You guys are all amazing like that and I love it."

"Keep telling you, we do have mad skills," he said softly. Hearing the door open, they both looked over to see Mahon coming in with a laden tray. Torben pushed up to a sitting position and helped her to ease up next to him. "What's Ark up to?" he asked as Mahon settled the tray on the bed.

"He was heading into the office fast. Apparently, there was a message about something on a job. I only caught part of it but he looked annoyed," Mahon said. "I'm going to have to head in as well. I think he's going to

need some help just from the way he was muttering. But I'll call in once I know he's there and get a status update first."

"Shit," Torben stared at him. "We only have the Morretti and then the Baker jobs on the go right now. Both were going smoothly. What the hell could have gone wrong? Especially with Ron overseeing them both while we were stuck in the office."

"Don't know, but like I said, Ark looked homicidal."

"Uh, no, you said annoyed," Torben wasn't looking as calm anymore.

"Same thing," Mahon shrugged, passing a plate to Goldie with eggs, bacon, and toast.

"Not with Arkadios," Torben snapped out. "Annoyed and homicidal are about as far apart for him as happy and pissed is for you dumbass."

"Yeah, no kidding." Goldie sat up in the bed and frowned. "Maybe I should get dressed and come in with you. It wouldn't do for him to go all fuzzy wuzzy bear on anyone and we all know he just might. He's feeling a little annoyed by not being able to join us but he's also pissy because of missing so much work. We all know he's a workaholic if ever there was one."

Torben and Mahon shared a look, a telling look. God damn it, she really needed to figure out how the whole silent conversation thing went with these guys. "I doubt he was annoyed," Mahon said softly. "He knows he's more than welcome with us at any time, you are mated to us all, Goldie. We'd never stop him from being here just as he'd never stop us; it's not how we work. But he was considerate enough to give us some time to be with you alone. We were pretty on edge if you hadn't guessed."

"He's also not a workaholic," Torben put in as he nibbled on a piece of bacon. "He's dedicated and he gets the job done as it should be no matter the time involved, just as we all do. But he has it all figured out in the balancing act of life. Probably better than me and Mahon ever will."

"Yes, I did notice you were both very much on edge. I know he's not a total workaholic but you have to admit he's pretty close to it. I love that man but sometimes he tends to work far too much and it bugs me. A great deal."

"He's got a smidge of a Type A personality, but we do too," Mahon said with a shrug. "It goes with the territory. Besides, if you told him to slow down you know he would, Goldie. He'd do it kicking and screaming but he would do it. Plus, even with you guys gone so long, he's been keeping track

of all the progress much to the more than slight irritation of our police friends.”

“Oh I knew that he would. However, I honestly think it had to have killed him to take those weeks off. The man was constantly trying to think out everything and anything that could have been done. Yeah, I really think it will be best if we just simply let him work till his heart's content. When I need a break, I will tell you all. Promise.”

“You sure?” Mahon asked, looking at her intently. When she nodded, he shrugged, “All right. But if you change your mind, any time at all, say the word. If all else fails we’ll truss him up like a turkey, it’s both fun and a challenge.”

Torben coughed suddenly, pounding on his chest. “Fuck, we haven’t done that to him since college,” he chuckled when he had his breath back.

Goldie laughed, “Oh hell. I so can’t wait to see you guys do that and then see just what he does in retribution because we know he will have his payback.” Oh, her Arkadios would pay them back too, and she would just sit back and laugh her ass off.

Both men flinched and shifted uncomfortably. “Yeah, maybe we shouldn’t,” Mahon said. “The last time we did I couldn’t walk for a week. And I’m pretty sure you still have the scar from when he decked you. He doesn’t take very well to being tied up, some serious trust issues with us I think.”

“Yeah, I don’t want you guys fighting at all. I want peace and harmony in our home. Now then, we should all get cleaned up and get into the office, so we can help Ark and hopefully, get home with a full staff still intact.”

“That would be a pleasant change,” Torben snorted. “Somehow though, by the time we get there, I have a feeling the massacre will be over with. All we’ll be dealing with will be the aftermath of whatever he’s done. He’s got a hell of a head start on us and the fact he’s homicidal...” he trailed off.

“Don’t worry, we will deal with it. Somehow and someday. Now then.” She grinned up at him. “So let’s get there so we can get our happy asses heading off anything that we can.”

“Finish your breakfast. We already know we’re too far behind him, so why waste a damn fine meal. Good job by the way, Mahon,” Torben said.

“I didn’t do much, Ark had it all ready mostly when I went down. All I had to do really was get the coffee and Goldie’s juice, load up the tray, and

bring it up here. After rescuing the pans from the stove when he went barreling through.”

“The food is actually really good; however, the fact of the matter is I really and truly am not all that hungry.” She found a reason to get out of breakfast and was more than willing to take it. “So how about you guys finish while I go and finish getting ready. Deal?”

They both nodded slowly but she caught the concern in their eyes. “You sure you’re okay?” Mahon asked, giving her a hand off the bed. Which he held onto as he stared into her eyes. “We didn’t hurt you did we?” he asked pulling her in a little closer, his voice lowering slightly.

“No honey, you didn’t hurt me,” Goldie told him and hugged him closer. “I just am not hungry,” she admitted. “I know it’s weird, I am usually always hungry. I think we should just get to work, don’t you?”

“We’re off.”

If we go in they’ll put us to work,” Torben said in an almost, but not quite, whine.

“He has a point, we did take the week off to be with you. They aren’t expecting us back in for a good long while,” he said softly. “Well, at least another six and a half days. So if we go in we’re going to have a good lot of hassle to deal with.”

“Well then, you guys drive me there and I will take charge. They wouldn’t dare to try to put me to work. I’m the one who ensures they get paid when they get paid,” she said with a grin. “So yep, it’s totally all good.”

“She has a point,” Mahon looked to Torben. Poor guy looked like he didn’t want to cave but finally did with a huff and a nod. Chuckling, Mahon looked up at her. “Go and clean up, we’ll head out in a little bit,” he said, pressing a kiss to her chin.

“Thank you,” Goldie told them both before kissing them again. She then took off for the shower. As much as she wanted to call out for them to join her, she knew it would be a bad idea and they would never leave. Besides, her thighs and pussy ached right now from their lovemaking and she needed a small break. Walking out of the bathroom, she looked at her guys and smiled. “You guys got ready too. Good thinking.” Moving to Mahon, she wrapped her arm around his middle and gave a squeeze. “Five minutes and I will be ready.” She just needed to get dressed and run a brush through her hair. “Go, I will be right down.”

Nodding, they each gave her a kiss before moving toward the door. They paused to snag keys and wallets before slipping out. Torben came right back though with a grin. Whistling, he wandered to the closet and grabbed his leather jacket. "Hurry up, we plan on grabbing coffee before we hit the office, just in case."

"Oh coffee." They said the magic word. Walking out right along with them, she smirked, "Are you guys taking separate cars? If so, why?" That was the question. "Because if you drive separately, I won't be able to snuggle up between the two of you and instead I will have to make the choice on who to ride with and that will make me pout."

"I'm the only one with a vehicle here currently," Torben told her. "Mahon's is in the shop and his bike is at the office. It was raining last night so he begged a ride. I was feeling mildly generous and let him come back with me."

"And since Ark took his truck to the office, we only have one way in until Torben gets his bike off the blocks in the garage," Mahon commented. He moved for the front door and grabbed his jacket.

"Ah, well then it seems as if I am riding with you guys. I really think we need to get your bikes back soon too. I really and truly love riding on the back."

"So, why again, exactly I mean, do you not like to drive?" Mahon asked as they headed toward Torben's truck.

"Because she's a menace to society while on the road," Torben said with a grin. Popping the locks, he got in behind the wheel. "She's too busy cussing out the rest of the world to pay attention to where she's going. And, now this may just be a rumor but I did hear she breaks out in hives."

"True on all counts. I totally hate driving because I can't control everyone around me. All I know is I get panic attacks and hives when and if I try to drive. I do believe from now on I will simply deal with having you guys taking care of me and driving me around."

"It's a damned good thing we love you like we do," Mahon said, boosting her into the truck cab. Following her when she was in, he shut the door. "Otherwise we might think you were using us for more than our dashing good looks and studly bodies."

She laughed at him and shook her head. "Yeah, it's a very good thing you love me like you do, and I love you like I do because it means we are now and always tied together."

“Damn straight,” Mahon grinned as they pulled away from the house.

Epilogue

Eight weeks later...

"I don't know why you're so nervous, Goldie. You've been through the big wedding already, this should be easy for you." Arkadios was leaning against the doorway and grinning at her as she fussed.

Their wedding had been small, sort of, with friends and family there. The white dress, minister, Ark in a tuxedo, and the guys as groomsmen. They'd had the big party and all that, but now it was time for a civil service for her to marry Torben and Mahon. Off the books of course, but it would be in her heart and that's all that mattered. But once again, the entire family was there and would be watching. No friends this time, no one who wasn't aware about her bears and their living arrangements.

He moved up behind her and caught her hands in his, turning her around. "Slow, deep breath, darling," he smiled down at her. "You've been through all of this, Goldie, and this time you only have family to deal with. I'll be right there with you the entire time. Walking you out and then I'll be standing there with my pom-poms cheering you on."

Goldie smiled and nodded. She moved so she could wrap her arms around his waist and pulled him close. "That sounds good to me." She looked up at him once more. "You will stay with me, the whole time, right?" At least before, she had Mahon on one side and Torben on the other. "I'm happy though, so very happy," she told him honestly, smiling as she spoke. "I can't believe how happy I am to be perfectly honest." She had absolutely everything she could possibly want. She had three men that would love her forever, no matter what.

Chuckling he wrapped his arms around her and gave her a hug. "I will be with you the entire time until we get up there. Then I will stand aside, watch and wait, for one of those fuckers to hit the turf. Assholes," he grumbled. Apparently, Torben and Mahon had been relentless in teasing Ark before the wedding. A bunch of nasty what-if scenarios all in the hope of having him fainting at the altar. Thankfully, it hadn't worked though, he'd only looked a little wobbly a time or two.

“Good. I am glad you are going to be with me every single second.” She took a deep breath, smoothed her hand down her gown, and grinned, “The gown is truly beautiful though isn’t it?” she asked quietly. “They did a great job in picking it out didn’t they?”

“They did at that,” he tipped his head to take her in. Lifting her hand, he spun her around slowly. “It’s amazing what those two can manage to accomplish with enough incentive,” he chuckled. A quick look at his watch and then he leaned in to kiss her. “You have three more minutes to fuss and then we need to get going.”

“I’m ready.” She had just needed the small talk down. “Are you sure they are there waiting for me? They aren’t going to leave me alone at the altar?” Honestly, that was her fear. Sad but true. She was terrified they would change their minds and not want the permanence of the civil ceremony that would join them all.

“They were up there not a minute ago playing rock-paper-scissors to see who stood on which side of you. Last I heard, they were up to sixteen out of thirty,” he said softly with a grin. He moved to the doorway and peeked out. “Yup, they are still going. I think the minister may end up having to call it though. Either that or he’ll pop each one upside the head.”

Laughter spilled from her lips. “Oh God, that’s perfect,” she teased with a smile. “Maybe you should tell them exactly what you want them to do and when you want them to do it. Maybe you need to be their voice of reason?”

“Oh I will, later, right now this is just too damned fun,” he chuckled. Turning back, he checked his watch and looked her way. “You ready?” he asked, holding out his hand to her. Right on, cue the music outside changed, one minute warning.

Goldie smiled at that and shook her head. “Oh my goodness this is going to be fun.” She looked up at Arkadios and smiled. “You get to tell them we are pregnant,” she teased. “After. Maybe. I think we should get through with this first, don’t you?”

“Oh hell yeah, if I tell them before then it might be the reason they end up going tits over teakettle,” he chuckled. Tucking her hand in the crook of his arm, he squeezed her fingers lightly. “Love you, Goldie,” he said softly, reaching out to brush a strand of hair away. “You ready for stage two of this?” he asked quietly.

“I’m totally ready,” she said with a grin. “I’m ready to have my happily ever after with you, babe. I need that with you. We are going to be good

together, all four of us. No matter what else happens. We deserve our forever happiness,” she teased him and gave him one more squeeze. “I love you too, Arkadios. Now, let’s get me married to those two shall we?”

“After all, we’ve been through of late, we do at that.” Leaning over, he kissed her lips, “I love you,” he whispered. The wedding march chose that moment to start playing. It was also their cue to get moving toward the other two. He drew back and smiled, “You are so beautiful.”

Goldie smiled her gaze radiant as she walked down the aisle toward her other two loves. God she loved those men, she loved them so very much. When they got to the front of the aisle and she looked at them, she knew life was finally right. Taking a deep breath, she moved in closer. This was where she needed to be—where she had always needed to be—living her only favorite fairy tale.

The End

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Excerpt from Ares

God of Old Book One
by Edlyn Reynolds

“How long has it been since you’ve been here?” his brother asked.

“Too long to admit,” he said, watching the group of students following their teacher and a guide around the temple.

“If you look over here class you can see what some scholars believe to be the remains of a sacrificial table.” The instructor was pointing to a section of the rubble that had been partially cleared. The area was cordoned off by ropes to keep people from stepping on things they shouldn’t.

Apollo shot him a look then grinned, “Did you ever actually have any sacrifices from the people?”

He shrugged. “Maybe. It’s hard to remember but I don’t think so.” The instructor, the guide and the students couldn’t hear them. They were cloaked between realms. Not really there and yet, there. “My worshippers were all about war, blood and death of their enemies. Not so much with the virginal sacrifices. I won’t say it never happened, because that could well be a lie, but honestly not ringing any bells for me.”

Apollo gave a laugh as they both walked closer to the group. “I must admit, brother,” he tipped his head. “I’m ever so glad today’s fashions are not like they were a mere hundred years past.” He reached out and slid a finger over one girl’s bared belly. She gave a small shiver, not surprising, many humans were sensitive to things they couldn’t see or hear but existed.

“That’s because you’re a man-slut, Apollo,” Ares said.

“Come now, brother.” He gave a huge grin and gestured to the group. “Are you going to tell me you are not enjoying the titillating display of feminine flesh?”

“That would be a lie, brother, and I must say, that it is a bit old. Too many women believe they need to show all to gain affections. There are so few these days who know a hint is sometimes so much more intriguing than the full monty.”

“Oh, excellent movie reference, brother. I didn’t know you had it in you,” Apollo gave a laugh. “I will agree to disagree with you there though. I

much prefer to see the wares before I purchase. I need to know just what I am getting.”

“Man-slut,” Ares coughed into his fist.

“Jealous much?” his brother gave a snort. “Really, brother of mine, you should do something about your apparent lack of female companionship. You’re becoming rather... Well, I hate to say this, but you really need to get laid. You’re much too uptight these days, brother.”

Ares threw him the finger, but his attention was on the instructor again.

“This is one of many statues of the God of War, or Ares, as you may better know him. There appear to be a few versions, most denoting a youthful appearance. He was often denoted as naked, wearing nothing but a helm and carrying a sword and shield, or a spear. He was also denoted as being fully armored. Some believe these statues,” the man gestured to the one before them, “were replacements for the originals. That when the Romans invaded and held Greece, they replaced them with ones created more in the appearance of their God, Mar, Ares’ Roman counterpart.”

The instructor turned to face the group. “There are also some scholars that believe this was not the original location for the temple. They believe the Romans actually moved it from its original place to this spot. There are markings on some stones that may give this theory some validity. There is also the fact archaeologists uncovered sites where bases for such temples were found, but no ruins.”

“Alright, well,” Apollo shifted from foot to foot next to him. “This is bloody boring as all get out. I’m going to go and see if I can’t find something a little more fun to do. Catch you later, brother.”

Ares didn’t reply and moments later, Apollo was gone. He continued to track the group. Listening in as the instructor, with the help of the guide, gave the class more information. Not so much about him or his temple in particular, but about the construction process. His brother had been right about one thing, the man was fairly boring in his teachings. He was passionate, but his topic wasn’t of any interest to him personally. Ares knew all about himself. He didn’t care about why or how the humans of the time had built his temple. They had and to his mind, that was the end of the story.

Excerpt from Team: Alpha

Knights of Ares Book One
by Honor James

"She's living in Sweetwater," Anton said as he looked up from the computer he'd been working on for the past hour. "She owns a small property, works at the local hospital and her daughter is enrolled in the local elementary school. She's never married and doesn't date. And from what I can see of her financials, every penny she brings in is very carefully handled and either goes to the kid or to necessities."

"Doesn't mean she doesn't date," Marius said, looking over his shoulder.

"No, but this does," he pulled up another screen. "This guy, Michael has been IM'ing her off and on for the last year. He asks her out and she says no, says she's not ready and so forth. Basically that is the cold hand of the brush off, lads."

"Sweetwater is only an hour away," Gareth murmured to Mikhail as they stood out of the way of the others who were tracking down Daisy and her daughter.

Nodding, he let out a breath, "She'll be on shift tonight, which means we're not going to have a hell of a lot of a chance to talk to her. We need to get to her as she comes off shift. Get to her when she's tired and not thinking clearly."

"We corner her and she'll run off," Gareth pointed out.

"Yeah, but we have to see her, if for no other reason than to return the diary that I'm pretty damn sure Honey wasn't supposed to be toting around," Mikhail looked at him. "We'll leave early and get there well before her shift ends. We'll take some of the lads and do a full recon to ensure she's actually there, and then use them to keep everyone else away from where we take her to talk."

"Sounds like a plan destined to get us thrown in jail," he muttered, rubbing a hand over his short red hair.

"Won't be the first time and I'm pretty sure it won't be the last," Mikhail smiled slowly. "Hell, at least jails in the States come with toilets and benches."

"Shut up," Gareth said before he nodded. "Let's do it." Turning to face the room, he moved to the table and looked around, "Guys, we have a shitty plan that has jail time written all over it. Who's in?"

Like he even had to ask.

Excerpt from Rush Against Time

Twisted Fates Series Book One
by Willow Brooke

Jessa Meadows shifted her weight between each foot unable to stand still. Today had proven to be even worse than the previous with no end in sight. The past few months had been a hurricane of agonizing disastrous events. With a huff, she slung her silky golden hair over her shoulder and handed the huge cup of coffee across the counter to the disgruntled and obviously caffeine deprived woman. When she turned around to grab the glass blender pitcher, she knocked it off onto the tile floor and it exploded into shards.

Jessa cursed under her breath at the broken glass that lay scattered around her feet. The past six months she had been slammed straight into her first heat with a vengeance. The more she fought it, the longer it dragged on and the more intense it grew. What was supposed to be a milestone in growing up as a shifter had become a living nightmare. It was similar to human puberty, only jacked up on steroids. A shifter could not scent their mate or be scented by their mate until after losing their virginity, or receiving a kiss from them. It was expected of all shifters to experiment sexually during this time, where in the human world it was socially and morally wrong to scratch every hormonal itch. Like wild animals, they would bang every single wolf who so much as gave them a wink and a smile. It was an animalistic fuck fest, and Jessa wanted no part of it. Her wolf fought for control, lunging at every weak spot in an attempt to take over. She was mentally drained, and physically restless. Obviously clumsy could be added to the growing list now, too. *Yippie freakin' skippy.* Frustration pooled in the rims of her eyes and threatened to spill as she cleaned up the shards.

Every man within sniffing distance was all up in her personal space, eagerly offering his services in every humorous and pathetic way possible. The problem was, she refused to give her virginity to the first mutt that came along. It might be unheard of in shifter society, but Jessa wanted her

first time to be meaningful. The idea of falling on her back for the first horn dog that came along at the right time made her stomach turn.

Lost deep in the recess of her thoughts while robotically preparing the next order at Mocha Express, her wolf growled and pranced in a challenging dance at the scents that wafted in her direction. The sudden yelp from the group of girls at the counter was a reality mental slap. The animalistic noise must have slipped out, because they now looked at her as if she had grown a tail. She had to resist the urge to peek behind her and make sure she hadn't. *Super.* Jessa offered up a sweet smile, hoping it would dissipate their sudden shock. Mocha Express was one of the few chains that catered to both humans and otherworldly creatures, offering treats and beverages for shifters, vampires, and many other magical creatures that humans were oblivious to. Plus, it provided cover for the group that occupied the attached mansion.

Vampires and shifters took up residency at Gates Manor, a huge mansion that dated back into the eighteenth century. The eclectic group of paranormal prodigies worked together to keep the balance of the world in order. To prevent the devil from spreading evil through demon possessions and taking over the magical community, angels banded together with this elite group and gave direct orders for them to follow. Not many knew of the group's existence, and great measures were taken to keep it that way. They were known as the Guardians by the select few who helped and fought with them on each mission.

Michael Stone was the head vampire in the agency, who was in charge of all of the vampires on the continent. He had a huge army of vampires at his ready who fought without question and at a moment's notice. His wife, Christina, was *the* most powerful witch who originated from the first bloodline. Her aunt Autumn had been until Christina accepted her powers in the moon ritual. Together, the duo was unbeatable. Most witches needed three to harness magic to their full abilities. Autumn and Christina didn't.

Next was Alan Black, one of Autumn's two mates. He was the alpha of the wolf shifters in Northern America and represented them in the Guardians. Her other mate, Braden Wilder, was the alpha of the jaguar shifters in North America and also member of the Guardians. Together, they all made up one big, happy—odd family.

Working the day shift at Mocha Express meant more humans and the need to contain her wolf better, but it also meant less shifters that her mangy

mutt would try to jump on. It was a catch-22.

Unfortunately, word must have gotten out of her schedule change. The door chimed announcing the arrival of the mob of six shifter men, all sporting huge grins and hungry looks. The intensity shooting from their eyes confirmed the hunger they had wouldn't be sated with Danish rolls or pastries. Anger immediately boiled through her veins. *Tough luck, guys. You aren't getting your hands on my cookies. Make a move. I dare you.*

Quickly drawing her attention back to the task-at-hand, she hurriedly finished the order and braced herself for the scene that was about to unfold. With her wolf chomping at the bit, she gritted her teeth and shoved the animal back into its restraints. *Time for some fun. Let's see if you guys can keep up!* She plastered the biggest smile she could muster, and turned to her overeager customers. "Good afternoon, gentlemen! What can I get for you today?"